



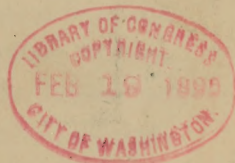


THE  
PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE  
FOUNDED ON LITERARY  
FORMS

BY

HENRY J. RUGGLES

AUTHOR OF "THE METHOD OF SHAKESPEARE AS AN ARTIST"



8435-2

BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

The Riverside Press, Cambridge

1895

THE  
LIBRARY OF SHAKESPEARE

OF THE  
LIBRARY

PR 2976

.R8

Copyright, 1895,  
By HENRY J. RUGGLES.

*All rights reserved.*

*The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.*  
Printed by H. O. Houghton and Company.



## PREFACE.

---

THAT the Plays of Shakespeare — or rather the Tragedies and Comedies, for the Histories are not now taken into account — are founded on Literary Forms is a proposition that will, at first glance, appear to many too improbable to be entitled to consideration, and hence it is deemed advisable at the outset to place here in the Preface a brief explanation of the purport and aim of this volume.

It is a commonplace that Shakespeare's plays are many-sided. They have, in the first place, an *Artistic* side, in which respect it is believed that they offer good examples of that theory of Art of Bacon's laid down in his Aphorism on "Instances of the Wit and Hand of Man" (Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 31), which declares that a work of true art must be founded on "*a form*." The word "form" Bacon uses technically, and it is perhaps unfortunate that he did so, as the wide difference between its scholastic or metaphysical sense and its common acceptation is apt to produce confusion. "A form" must not in the least be confounded with *figure* or *shape*; it may perhaps be defined, at least for present purposes, as that inward constitutive principle which gives to a thing its specific properties, and is about equivalent to the *idea* or *law* of a thing, of which the outward form and sensible properties are the product. When stated in language, it is an axiom or definition; as, for instance, "the form" of History (as a species of writing) is a judgment of men by trial and experience, or "the form" of a fable is to convey a knowledge of the world by symbols. For critical purposes, the terms "*form*," *idea*, and *law* may be considered as interchangeable; but as the theory that a "form" is essential to a work of

art is more particularly explained, in the remarks upon *The Winter's Tale* (a play which treats of Art), it need not here be enlarged upon.

The plays have also a *moral* side, being pictures of human life, which present the old and everlasting contest between the desires and the reason, varied only from play to play by the difference in the objects pursued, — a difference, however, sufficient to give each play its own ideal and its own standard of judgment. And in this respect the moral and artistic sides blend, for the poet goes for his “forms” to literature, or, say, learning generally, of which each special style is determined by its purpose or end ; as, for instance, to refer again to the case of History, the purpose or end of History is to judge of the comparative worth and rank of men as proved by actual trial. This is apparently the essential idea of History and what Bacon would call its “form ;” or in the case of a fable, the end is to convey a knowledge of moral truth by symbols, and this is its “form ;” and when such an idea or “form” is adopted as a constructive principle of a play and is developed back, as it were, into dramatic life and action, representing that side of human affairs, or that pursuit of ends, which furnishes the matter for the special style of writing from which “the form” is taken, it becomes obviously the rule that must be followed for the successful attainment of such ends, and, therefore, has a moral as well as an artistic side, as — again to recur to History — a play founded on the “form” of History will exhibit a world in which men have for their ends the passing of judgments upon persons and things with a view of assigning them their rank, at least, in their own esteem and love, if not in general estimation ; while the rule that insures the correctness of such judgments requires the use of actual test as proof.

But as, in the pursuit of their desires, men make use of those means which they have been taught by experience are the best for the purpose, they in time formulate these means into methods and rules, and thus create Arts and Sciences, as, to take familiar instances, from a desire of health and the use of means



to preserve it, there arises the Art of Medicine, or, from a wish to persuade, the Art of Rhetoric ; or, to recur once more to History, of which the end is to make a correct judgment of men by actual proof, but in doing which the mind is often misled by secondary evidence unless means are taken to guard it against error, such means, when approved by experience, are framed into rules and methods that constitute the Art of Judging, or what is called the Inductive Method ; and in like manner with other sciences.

Consequently the plays have a *scientific* or *doctrinal* side, being so constructed that their personages in the pursuit of their ends exemplify, positively or negatively, by their action and speech, the tenets and rules of that art, science, or doctrine which grows out of the means used to accomplish their purposes or gratify their desires ; from which it is apparent that not only do the moral and artistic sides coalesce, but that these two are also incorporated with the philosophic side into one.

And it is observable that in these illustrations of different branches of learning, the poet for the most part follows the divisions of the sciences laid down by Bacon, but not always ; for he sometimes takes his rules from Aristotle, but this apparently is only in cases where Bacon is silent on the points involved.

These plays have, moreover, what may be called a *rhetorical* side, that is, they may be examined as compositions with respect to their diction and metaphor, and particularly their use of words that are affined with or suggestive of the leading conceptions of the play, together with the phrases scattered through the piece containing thoughts, similes, and figures of speech that present analogies to the rule that is implicit in "the form," or rather is "the form" or organic idea ; and to this side also belongs the consideration of language itself in those peculiar phases and properties, and particularly those imperfections of it which cause it greatly to mislead the judgment, or which give it a special relation to that view of life and branch of literature of which "the form" is the essential law.

In addition to the above modes of considering these plays, they

have also a *dramatic* and a *poetical* side, in viewing the former of which notice may be taken of the curious and ingenious artifices employed to accelerate or retard the time or movement of the action, or to strengthen the effectiveness of the scene or unify the details of the piece; and also of the incessant vigilance and mental activity in the nice adaptation of scene and stage or outward world to the moral tone and level of the sentiments and conduct of the characters, and other similar matters; while, viewed on their *poetical* side, that is, as complete works of art, we see the bare moral skeletons with which analysis only concerns itself, now reinvested with flesh and blood, and the whole piece become a world of living, breathing reality, with innumerable lights and shades, and filled with the joy and terror of life, enlisting the sympathies, delighting the imagination, and satisfying that sense of beauty to which it is the aim of art to minister. But these two last sides of the plays have been set forth by a thousand pens, with a force, insight, and eloquence that leave nothing to be desired, and to which nothing to any purpose could well be added; therefore but little note is taken of these particulars in the following pages. On the other heads, however, there has not so much been said; indeed, it is believed that a wide field of Shakespearian study remains yet unexplored, and of a few gleanings in this field this volume is offered as a contribution.

It is perhaps impossible to venture into the domain of Shakespearian criticism without treading on ground that has been traversed by others; and if in the following pages there shall be found matter that belongs to other writers (outside of that general stock of information that is common to all) for which credit is not given (of which, however, the present writer is not conscious of any instance), it is hoped that such omission will be attributed to inadvertency, and not to any disposition to appropriate the labors of others without acknowledgment; and, furthermore, it may perhaps not be superfluous to add that the bulk of this volume has been written many years.

When the word "form" is used in this volume in its technical or Baconian sense, it will be marked with inverted commas.

## CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE.
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CYMBELINE . . . . .	6
THE WINTER'S TALE . . . . .	86
KING LEAR . . . . .	162
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE . . . . .	240
ALL 'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL . . . . .	276
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA . . . . .	333
AS YOU LIKE IT . . . . .	400
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING . . . . .	452
THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR . . . . .	496
ROMEO AND JULIET . . . . .	520
OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE . . . . .	579
THE TEMPEST . . . . .	655





# THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE FOUNDED ON LITERARY FORMS.

---

## INTRODUCTION.

IF a moralist or a metaphysician — or say, a philosopher combining both in one — wished to illustrate his rules of conduct or his laws of mind or, in other words, his moral or mental science by examples drawn from real life, he would be obliged to ransack histories, lives, memoirs and other records of human action for cases in point; but if he could command the pen of a great dramatic poet or were he such a poet himself, endowed with a creative imagination and a profound knowledge of the world, he might invent plays so near to truth and nature that, while complying with the demands of dramatic art, they would present such pictures of life and of the good and evil in men's natures as would exemplify a "philosophy of man." In such plays, the characters would have that mental constitution, the events that moral significance, and the dialogue those thoughts and sentiments, which, like the characters and events of real life, would furnish materials for a systematic knowledge of human nature; with this difference, however, that whereas truth in real life is gathered from widely scattered particulars, in these plays it would in each be presented in characters and incidents woven into one connected story, furnishing all the examples necessary for the elucidation of some special branch of moral science. A drama written on this plan would be a vast collection of mental and moral phenomena making up in the aggregate a Natural History of the human mind, of which each play would constitute a separate chapter, devoted to some particular phase of life, with its special class of moral facts. Such a Natural History, it is believed, are the plays of Shakespeare; the proof of which, however, must be in showing that these plays can be used, not merely in scraps and parts, but in their whole scope and tenor, to exemplify a well digested system of philoso-

phy. The abstract propositions of the philosopher must be revived and made, as it were, to flower out into concrete and dramatic life and action. The thesis of the following pages is that the Shakespearian drama does this for the philosophy of Bacon.

This philosophy was not a theory of the world, but a *method of judgment*; it professed to teach men how to arrive at a valid conclusion. No doubt it aimed, in its ultimate results, at a complete comprehension of the universe, but in its initial step it was an "organum" or "machine" to guide the judgment in the investigation of truth. This is a *cardinal fact* and should be kept in mind, as it is in the correct or incorrect formation of judgments that the doctrines of Bacon seem most effectually to be carried into the characters and action of the plays.

One of Bacon's chief aims was to emancipate the mind from its enthrallment to the Aristotelian logic, which, though of use in its appropriate sphere, was, he contended, wholly inadequate to cope with the subtilty of nature. He therefore brought forward a new method of Induction, which admits no conclusion, except upon proof of sense and experience, and this, too, in all the gradations of inference from simple particulars to the highest generalities. This is obviously in direct contrast with the method commonly practiced by the mind, which, after gathering a few and in most cases quite inadequate number of facts, hastens to generalize upon them; and accepting the propositions thus obtained as incontrovertible truths, adopts them as premises, by which to prove the intermediate propositions. This latter or deductive method, which was the one almost universally in fashion previous to Bacon's age, is exposed to many errors; the facts or proofs it relies upon are few in number and insufficiently tested, the conclusions derived from them are hasty and unsound, and the syllogisms founded on such conclusions are untrustworthy, since "syllogisms consist of propositions and propositions of words; and words being but the current tokens and imperfect signs of things and full of deceit and ambiguity, necessarily vitiate the conclusion." It was to combat and do away with this unsatisfactory mode of arriving at truth that Bacon invented his "organum" by which he sought to "make the mind a match for the nature of things."

The leading distinction then between the system of Bacon and



that of the old philosophies — to which latter the mind is of its own nature prone — lay in the different methods of proof and judgment. Consequently if these plays or any of them can be taken as illustrative examples of the Baconian philosophy, they must, of necessity, exhibit and contrast in their principal features the correct and incorrect exercise of the judgment in forming conclusions, and furnish incidents, characters, and situations which will serve as examples both of the Inductive and Deductive methods of demonstration. Of these methods, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* are, respectively, leading instances. It may be remarked that the mode in which philosophy, as such, is exemplified in the plays is very simple. The formation of a correct judgment is the only means of arriving at truth and consequently lies at the bottom of all science. A Shakespearian play is a representation of practical life, and must, in its action, exhibit characters that necessarily exercise their judgments in the choice of ends and also of the means of attaining such ends, and these means, when rightly selected, which they can only be through a knowledge of causes, are resolvable into the application of causes to produce effects and furnish rules for some special art or doctrine; so that it is easy for the dramatist, provided he be possessed of the requisite knowledge and fertility of thought — and Shakespeare has always been supposed to be abundantly gifted with these — to convert his play, without in the least affecting its dramatic qualities, into an illustrative example of some special branch of knowledge.

In his attempts at the reformation of philosophy, Bacon taught that the old systems were, so far as a knowledge of nature was concerned, but useless theories made up of words and wholly unproductive of works; for which he proposed to substitute facts and things; and in treating of the prejudices and delusions that infest the human mind and obscure the judgment, he assigned the first rank in importance to those which grow out of the imperfections and perversions of words and names. This notion that language is the main source of error is constantly put forward by Bacon, “for the great sophism of all sophisms,” he says, “is equivocation or ambiguity of words and phrases;” and the same notion in some form is exemplified in almost every play of Shakespeare; in fact, it is most intimately connected with that contrast between the factitious and the real, which is one of the most notable features of the Shakespearian drama.

But neither these nor any other general resemblance in the plays to Bacon's tenets can be taken as a ground on which to build an argument that there is a connection between the plays and the philosophy. It will be said that it needed not Bacon nor any other seer or prophet to couch the eye of the writer of *Hamlet* or *Othello* in order that he might see the difference between words and things, and no parallelism between the general views and doctrines expressed by the poet and philosopher will be accepted as proof—in the first instance at least—of any communication or other privity between them; but it so happens that in the later plays, and particularly in those written towards the close of the dramatist's career, the apparent similitudes point not simply to the theoretical views, but to the system and technicalities of the Baconian philosophy; they seem to reach the classification and subdivisions of the subjects of which they treat. Two great original minds, investigating the same subject, might, and in all probability would, arrive at the same general conclusions; and as truth is one, the profounder their intellects, the more likely they would be to concur; but no two original minds classify alike, for originality may be said to consist in the power of making a new classification, that is, of subjecting phenomena to a new principle of arrangement, the selection of which depends upon affinities and processes of thought that are peculiar to each mind and constitute its originality. To say, therefore, that two original minds classify alike is a contradiction of terms. Yet between the writings of Bacon and these plays, there are seemingly coincidences that indicate an identity not only of philosophic views but also of the distribution and even the nomenclature of the subject. If then these similitudes be not entirely fanciful; if they shall be found to be too numerous and systematic to be considered casual, it will follow that there is some connection between the plays and the Baconian philosophy, and consequently that between Bacon and Shakespeare there existed some personal relation, the nature of which, however, must be left to conjecture since neither history nor tradition makes any mention of it.

One point should be borne in mind. Shakespeare's plays, though thoroughly diversified and each possessing its own style and manner, even its own idioms and peculiarities of phraseology and versification, yet all have the same subject; they all treat of

*Man*; and will, therefore, in their philosophy sometimes overlap each other; for man can be considered only as an individual, or as a member of society or the State; and inasmuch as the philosophical truths growing out of his nature as an individual or as a social or political being are few in number compared with the infinite variety of actions and events, the same passages from Bacon will occasionally be cited with reference to incidents in different plays; yet notwithstanding these repetitions and this superficial sameness, it will be found, it is believed, that the application of the principles is in each case different and the subject looked at from a different point of view.

These repetitions take place more particularly with reference to the doctrine of "Idols," which being but another name for the prejudices and fallacies that beset the human mind, must necessarily take a prominent place among illustrations of *errors of judgment*.

The plays each present an artistic, a moral and a philosophic side, which, though they can be considered separately, support each other and blend in one total effect.

The shortest road to the philosophy of the plays is through their art, inasmuch as this philosophy finds exponents in the sentiments, purposes, and mental habits of the characters, which, of course, depend upon the constructive law of the piece; and for this reason, *The Winter's Tale* should perhaps be taken up before *Cymbeline*, for *The Winter's Tale* treats of art and may be regarded as a model which fully illustrates Bacon's doctrine of the development of works of art from "forms," yet as *Cymbeline* seems to put into life and action the inductive method itself, it logically leads the way and is therefore first considered.

The quotations from Bacon's works are chiefly from the edition of Spedding, Ellis and Heath (reprinted in Boston, 1860), sometimes from that of Montagu.



## CYMBELINE.

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE purpose of the following analysis of the play of *Cymbeline* is to show, that, although a romantic drama, presenting a highly poetical, not to say a fantastic, phase of life, it nevertheless illustrates, in dramatic life and action, the method of the Experimental Philosophy, together with some other doctrines of Bacon; but in order that it may be more precisely understood what particular doctrines are here referred to, they will be briefly stated.

In the *De Augmentis* in which Bacon classifies and distributes the extant arts and sciences and also notes those that are deficient, he thus makes the primary division of learning:—

“The best division of human learning is that derived from the three faculties of the rational soul which is the seat of learning; *history* being relative to the memory, *poetry* to the imagination, and *philosophy* to the reason.” Book II. ch. 1.

The logical arts he thus divides: “The logical arts are four in number, divided according to the ends at which they aim, for men’s labor in rational knowledge is either to invent that which is sought, or to judge that which is invented, or to retain that which is judged, or to deliver over that which is retained: so, therefore, the rational arts are four: Art of enquiry or invention; Art of Examination or judgment; Art of Custody or memory, and Art of Elocution or tradition.” Book V. ch. 1.

“Invention is of two kinds very different; the one of *arts and sciences*, the other of *speech and argument*. The former of these I report altogether deficient.” Book V. ch. 2.

This deficiency Bacon aims at supplying by the *Novum Organum*, or new instrument for the mind. It is the true Inductive method resting on experience and is called *The Interpretation of Nature*.

The Art of Judging, the second of the rational arts above named, “handles the nature of proofs and demonstrations. In this art, as indeed it is commonly received, the conclusion is made either by *induction* or *sylogism*.” Book V. ch. 4.

The syllogism, as a means of investigating nature, is utterly condemned by Bacon, and induction, as defined by the logicians, fares no better at his hands.

"For the vicious forms of induction," he says, "I entirely disclaim it, and as for the *legitimate form* I refer it to the *New Organum* or *our method of interpreting nature*."

The Art of Memory Bacon divides into "two parts, viz, the doctrine of helps for the memory and the doctrine of the memory itself. The help for the memory is writing . . . and tables duly arranged." Book V. ch. 5.

The Art of Transmission, or "the art of producing and expressing to others those things which have been invented, judged, and laid up in the memory, includes *all the arts relating to words and discourse*." This art, says Bacon, "I will divide into three parts: the doctrine concerning the *organ* of discourse, the doctrine concerning the *Method* of Discourse, and the doctrine concerning the *Illustration* or adornment of discourse."

The organ of speech is words and letters, "but this art of transmission has some other children besides words and letters."

"The notes of things are of two kinds . . . Of the former are *hieroglyphics* and *gestures*; of the latter, real characters."

"Gestures are as transitory hieroglyphics; for as uttered words fly away, but written words stand, so hieroglyphics expressed by gestures pass, but expressed in pictures remain." Book VI. ch. 1.

The foundation of the Baconian philosophy is a complete and accurate *natural and experimental history* as materials for induction.

"The foundations of *experience* (our sole resource,)" he says, "have hitherto failed completely or have been very weak, nor has a store or collection of particular facts capable of improving the mind or in any way satisfactory been either sought after or amassed. . . . We must begin, therefore, to entertain hopes of natural philosophy, then only when we have a better compilation of *natural history, its real basis and support*." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 98.

And in his "Preparative towards a Natural and Experimental History" he gives a "description" and sets out "*the figure and plan*" or *idea* of such a history, as he deems necessary as a foundation for philosophy.

But materials for induction must not only be collected; they must be arranged and digested into Tables — of Invention or Discovery, so called — so that the mind can act freely upon them and thus make an *inquisition and induction*. So apprehensive was Bacon lest his method should prove too abstruse for popular comprehension that he designed to set it forth in examples which should render it obvious, as it were, to the sense. In his *Cogitata et Visa*, which was unpublished in his lifetime, but written about 1607 (and therefore in all probability antedating the play of *Cymbeline*), he says "that it appeared to him all important, that *tables of invention or formulas of a legitimate inquisition*, that is, *collections of*

*particulars, arranged for the work of the understanding, in certain subjects should be set forth as an example or visible representation of his method."*

Of the above Arts and Doctrines the following analysis aims at showing that the play of *Cymbeline* illustrates the Art of Invention in that branch of it which is called *The Invention of Arts* or the *Interpretation of Nature*.

Also the Art of Judging in that branch of it which Bacon considers the true and legitimate Induction wherein all proof is made by Experience.

That it also furnishes examples of the Art of Memory in that branch of it which treats of the "*helps of the memory*."

That it also illustrates the Art of Transmission in that branch of it which treats of *the organ of speech* and more particularly of the doctrine of "*gestures as living hieroglyphics or signs significant*."

And that the play is founded on the *idea* of History and more particularly *Natural History*, according to Bacon's plan of "a history as a foundation for philosophy," which together with the illustrations of The Art of Judging and The Art of Invention above mentioned, renders it a pattern in dramatic form of what Bacon sometimes calls "*A Natural Story and Inquisition that draws down to the sense*" the method of Induction.



## CYMBELINE.

*Cymbeline*, viewed as a work of art, is a model in dramatic form of a Chronicle History, a species of writing in which a large growth of Romance is engrafted on a slender historical stock. *Cymbeline* is history, so far as it treats of public events, of intrigues for the succession of the crown, of the reception of ambassadors, and of wars waged for the national defense or honor; it is Romance, so far as it treats of the private and personal fortunes of its leading characters; and is called *Cymbeline*, after the chief historical personage, a title, which without suggesting any particular story or series of incidents, stands for the events of a fabulous king's reign.

History is a record of human experience, and it must, if truly written, be consistent with all experience, for there is one heart and conscience common to all men, and every individual man contains within himself, potentially, the history of the race. The facts of history, like the experiences of individuals, are infinitely diversified in form, but as they are but effects referable to principles in the nature of man, they are intelligible to all who share in human thought and sympathy. Experience is the ground of all knowledge and skill: by observation and experiment, we become acquainted with the occult virtues and effects of external things and accumulate the facts of science; and by trial and development of our instincts and motives, we gain a knowledge of our own natures, and thus, generally, of human nature. This last knowledge opens to us an insight into the operation of moral causes; by it we read the hearts of others, interpret motives by actions, and predict conduct from character. Experience, therefore, leads to the knowledge of the inward truth and meaning of the outward fact and sign, particularly in the moral world; and as history is a record of experience, it teaches us the virtue and effective force of men, of which their actions are the external types.

To evolve the hidden moral causes of actions and thereby

determine the *comparative worth* and consequently the *relative place* of the agents, is the aim of History, the value of which consists in the examples it sets of the heroism and the weakness, the height and the degradation of the human soul. To store the memory with names and dates avails nothing, but we plod through the records of the past to learn the capabilities of our nature as evinced in actual trial from which only can we learn the truth.

The essence or idea, or to use the Baconian term, the "*form*" of History, then, is a *judgment on the natures of men as proved by experience, and the consequent assignment of them to their proper place or rank*. The historian only does for human nature what the man of science does for physical nature — interpret the properties of objects by experiment.

The incident which originates the movement of the plot is the marriage of Imogen, a princess and heiress of the British crown, to Posthumus, who, though styled "a beggar" by reason of his low estate, unites to the noblest natural qualities the breeding and education of a prince. Out of this match, so fit on moral grounds, yet so incongruous when judged by the artificial standard of birth and wealth, there grows the consideration of what is true rank and true worth, and the relations of Man to Place, but *place* here is not confined to high place or great place, or to that precedency so dear, as Chaucer tells us, to aldermen's wives, —

"For it is full fain to be yelected madame  
And for to gon to vigiles all before  
And have their mantels royally ybore," —

but comprises the profession, vocation, estate, grade, and even nationality of every individual whatever, and in fact refers to any and every situation, which can, through difference of rank, condition, or country affect the judgment or feelings towards men and things.

As History is experience and experience life, or at least such knowledge of it as is derived from actual trial, a drama in order to be a model of History, must portray life in no particular phase of it, but in those general features that are common to all men. The representation must be broad and comprehensive enough to be typical of all life, social and individual, and illustrate those primary principles that underlie all human actions as well as the moral sentiments by which such actions are adjudged worthy of

praise or blame. Of these principles, a full statement of which would constitute the *natural history* of the human mind, and out of which as *motives of action* all *civil history* flows, the following appear to be the chief ones that enter into the scheme of the piece. This scheme, it should be observed, is but the unfolding of those various conceptions which are implicated in "the idea" of History and which are embodied and represented in the characters and incidents of the piece.

Human life, as revealed by sense and experience, is a current of sensations and feelings, excited by the objects of the external world, or by the workings of our own minds which, as they seem to conduce to our good and confer pleasure, or, on the other hand, inflict evil or pain, awaken likes or dislikes, desires or aversions, love or hate. Of these two cardinal principles, love and hate, or more generally, *sympathy* and *antipathy*, all the desires and affections which can operate as motives on the will appear to be but different degrees and modifications. These range through numberless shades from the slightest emotions to the wildest passions; but the more usual forms of sympathy are love, pity, admiration, joy, and those lighter pleasurable feelings, such as content, gladness, etc., arising from the manifold occurrences of common experience; while, of antipathy, the more familiar instances are hate, anger, resentment in many various degrees, grief (including penitence and contrition), envy, jealousy, revenge, together with the thousand chagrins and vexations that spring from the petty annoyances of life. These feelings are *instincts* of our nature. In their lowest forms common examples may be found in the consents or disagreements between the appetites and the objects they like or loathe; or on a higher plane, in the admiration or pleasure imparted by the beautiful and harmonious or in the distaste or aversion excited by the deformed and discordant, or in the moral world instances may be met with in the instinctive approbation awarded to what is noble in purpose or conduct, or the natural indignation or contempt felt at what is base. These sympathies and antipathies are kept in play by the objects which on all sides are ever soliciting our attention; or, as it may be, by the reaction of our own minds; and of these objects our constant occupation is to estimate the value; to know which to choose, which to reject, and to form a scale of things, according to their real worth: but of all causes



that operate upon our feelings, nothing is so potent, nor is there anything of which it is so necessary to form a correct judgment, as the character and conduct of our fellow-beings. These last, like all other objects in nature, excite our emotions, but they work upon us to an incalculably higher degree, for the reason that they are possessed of like passions with ourselves. So powerful is the bond of sympathy, that like an instrument of which the strings, untouched and silent, yet vibrate in response to the tone that accords with them, every man is affected, often unconsciously to himself, by every exhibition of human feeling that falls under his notice. Thus a common heart or *universal sympathy* binds men in one brotherhood, while a common frailty and mortality necessitate mutual help and service. The whole practical intercourse of life is but an exchange of services.

The feelings and passions — which are familiarly spoken of as “the heart,” and are popularly supposed to have their seat in that organ — vary in individuals according as different strains of blood mingle in their veins, thus leading to natural differences in the dispositions and tempers of men, and out of this variety arise the subdivisions of society into different vocations, professions, and pursuits, so that the exchange of services, particularly in a highly artificial state of society, becomes to a great degree a mere matter of bargain and sale, and is estimated by a money value; yet the original nature of these services as dependent upon sympathy and love is still seen in the offices of domestic life as well as in those of courtesy, charity, and friendship. The ordinary formulas of civility are professions of kindness and service. Out of these differences among men, also, naturally springs the relation of master and servant, the type of all rank, which at the present day is become, in most instances, a matter of contract and hire, but which originally grew out of the protection and bounty of the strong to the weak, and was a tie of loyalty — “of love and vows and obedience” — as is represented between Posthumus and Pisanio.

The doctrine of the piece that, notwithstanding differences of place, men are bound up in one brotherhood, is stated in the following lines: —

“Arv. *Are we not brothers?*

Imo. *So man and man should be,*

*But clay and clay differ in dignity  
Whose dust is both alike."*

Act IV. Sc. 2.

Notwithstanding a common brotherhood and a common mortality, there is a scale of men, a rank inherent in human nature; and this depends upon love manifested in services, of which the gradation reaches from the most menial offices to those exalted acts of self-sacrifice and heroism that are the glory of humanity. Great services, implying greatness of heart and mind and conferring important benefits, receive through the admiration and gratitude of the world, great rewards; and love naturally draws after it wealth and power and station, together with that reverence which is the tribute men gladly pay to worth and which, consequently, is the bond of order and the essence of civility.

*"Though mean and mighty, rotting  
Together, have one dust, yet reverence  
(That angel of the world) doth make distinction  
Of place 'tween high and low."*

Act IV. Sc. 2.

As Ben Jonson puts it, "goodness gives greatness and greatness worship," and even in so small a society as that formed by Belarius and his reputed sons, the same rule prevails.

*"He that strikes  
The venison first shall be lord o' the feast:  
To him the other two shall minister;  
And we will fear no poison, which attends  
In place of greater state."*

*"You, Polydore, have prov'd best woodman, and  
Are master of the feast: Cadwal and I  
Will play the cook and servant; 't is our match;  
The sweat of industry would dry and die,  
But for the end it works to."*

Act III. Sc. 6.

So too, Bacon says, "Honor is or should be the place of virtue," and the chief value he attributes to place lies in the augmented means it affords of doing good. "Power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring; for good thoughts, though God accept them, yet towards men, are little better than good dreams, except that they be put in act and that cannot be without power and place as the vantage and commanding ground." Distinction

and honor, once acquired by the virtue of the ancestor, are on the theory of the transmissibility of qualities by blood, continued to his descendants, for, though men of eminence but seldom transmit their merit or their force to "that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son," the notions of blood and family are so far founded in nature as to be universally received and in most countries furnish a ground for a hereditary nobility and regulate the succession of the crown. This subject is thus touched upon in the play :—

" O noble strain !

O worthiness of nature ! breed of greatness !  
Cowards father cowards and base things sire base :  
Nature hath meal and bran, contempt and grace."

" O thou goddess,

Thou divine nature, how thyself thou blazon'st  
In these two princely boys !"

" 'T is wonder

That an *invisible instinct* should frame them  
To royalty unlearn'd ; honor untaught ;  
Civility not seen from other : valor  
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop  
As if it had been sow'd."

Act IV. Sc. 2.

The exception to the rule is stated in the case of Cloten.

" That such a crafty devil as is his mother  
Should yield the world this ass ! a woman that  
Bears all down with her brain ; and this her son  
Cannot take two from twenty, for his heart,  
And leave eighteen."

Act II. Sc. 1.

But "nobility commonly abateth industry," wealth and station are apt to produce degeneracy through self-indulgence and to create special sympathies and class-feelings, which narrow and restrict that broad love which theoretically lies at the bottom of a noble life ; and the pride of rank, together with the uncertainty and exceptions to which hereditary excellence is exposed, in very many cases separates the true aristocracy from the factitious ; so that in every community there is found a double scale of rank, one of wealth and birth dependent upon fortune ; the other of character and moral worth, which is substantial and finds recogni-



tion in the esteem of mankind. This latter scale, dependent as it is upon kindness and services, that is, upon doing good, culminates in a character which, though old as love and valor, has been known since the days of mediæval chivalry as *the gentleman*, a name which in its original acceptation implies blood and family, but to which few of any stock are entitled; for a true gentleman or a true lady is the summit of human nature, the very flower and perfection of high-bred humanity. In the language of the piece "it is all that makes a man both without and within," and resting on an essential basis of truth, love and magnanimity, it requires for its highest type all the graces and accomplishments of both intellect and person.

Men are judged of by their motives and purposes — which, of course, denote their natures — and this not merely in important matters but in all the conduct of their lives. Every word and action springs from a motive and has a purpose; and words, looks, gestures, and actions are the outward signs of the inward mind and meaning, which we read by an instinctive sympathy. And according as we discern motives to be good and purposes to be beneficial, we express our sympathy in admiration and applause, and, on the other hand, if motives and ends appear malicious and hurtful, we feel scorn and contempt; in the one case, elevating men in the scale and in the other degrading them. In judging of men, however, in practical life it does not appear that we compare them with the ideal of perfect humanity, which would be too high a standard for ordinary use. But in the first instance we are ourselves the standard with regard to the merit or demerit of other men,<sup>1</sup> for it is only by imagining ourselves in their place and asking of our own hearts and consciences what would be fit or becoming or right for us to do under like circumstances that we are enabled to form an estimate of their conduct. Each individual generalizes from himself to the whole race, and unhesitatingly asserts that what he feels under given circumstances every other man must or will or ought to feel. Thus each man makes himself the standard with regard to the conduct and consequently

<sup>1</sup> "Every faculty in one man is the measure by which he judges of the like faculty in another. I judge of your sight by my sight, of your ear by my ear, of your reason by my reason, of your resentment by my resentment, of your love by my love. I neither have nor can have any other way of judging about them." Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

the place to be assigned to every other man. He sees that other men are either above or below him until from observation and experience he acquires a notion of an average man, a certain standard of force and merit which most men reach; and although there may be many perhaps who greatly transcend this height, yet these we do not judge of in ordinary practical life by any ideal formed of the perfect hero or true gentleman, but estimate them as rising to a higher or lower degree above that ordinary level which experience tells us is the usual mean proportion of excellence among men. It may be considered also that the ideal furnishes no uniform standard, for it will vary according to the sensibility or culture of the mind that forms it; but the average man, being drawn from experience and actual life, must be about the same in the minds of all men. And this average seems to be the ordinary standard of men in the affairs of life.

But however accurate the standard of judgment and whether the same be the ideal or the average of humanity as taught by experience, or both,<sup>1</sup> as some suppose, the judgment needs to be protected from the errors which arise from the deceptions of the sense and the dissimulation of the world; for notwithstanding true service is the measure of moral force and is alone entitled to the prizes of life, many will seek preferment by flattery and pretended admiration of the powerful and great. And here again comes in the play of sympathy, since all acting and dissimulation are carried out by sympathetic imitation. He is the best actor who most deeply sympathizes with the part he represents. These arts are set before us in the very opening of the play in the pretended sympathy of the courtiers with the anger of the king.

“ You do not meet a man but *frowns* : our bloods  
No more obey the heavens, than *our courtiers*  
Still *seem* as does the king.

But not a courtier,  
Although they wear *their faces to the bent*  
Of the king's looks, hath a heart that is not  
Glad at the thing they scowl at.”

Act I. Sc. 1.

But dissimulation is by no means confined to the courts of the great. On the contrary, the practice is universal, pervading all ranks and conditions. Wherever man has a point to gain, he seeks

<sup>1</sup> Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.



to please those whose services or aid he needs. There are but few friends of that candor of mind that is always free from insincerity; the fondest lovers sometimes dissemble and brothers of the same blood often, in their intercourse, wear a double face and talk with a double tongue. To judge correctly, therefore, of the motives of men, a deep knowledge of the world and of the human heart is necessary. Our only guide is experience. We are incessantly employed in reading the words and actions of those around us as expressive of their motives and character; and the main business of our lives may be said to be the *interpretation of human nature by trial and experience*.

But there is another and greater cause of error even than the deceits of the world and that is the perversion of judgment, which results from our own feelings being almost always enlisted; but above all are we led astray by the whisperings of that arch flatterer that every man carries in his own bosom. Inordinate self-esteem vitiates our standard of judgment; we rate ourselves too high and others too low; and this error is greatly increased by those special sympathies and class-feelings that have their root in difference of rank, vocation, and condition. This, too, is common to all ranks; the low being as apt to misjudge the feelings of the high as the high are those of the low. This error also can only be corrected by experience; and just as the value of different minerals or plants is known by experiment, so it is by actual trial of ourselves and others that the real worth and relative difference of men can be proven.

Not only difference of place taken metaphorically as rank, but difference of place taken literally, as locality, has influence to produce special sympathies that grossly mislead the judgment. Such sympathies indulged in a proper degree are often among the most meritorious of our sentiments, — a love of country, for instance, which, however, when allowed to run into excess, becomes a narrow and malignant prejudice. For the cure of this ultra-patriotism, which disdains and misjudges everything foreign as inferior and worthless, travel or experience of other countries is the best remedy. It is on the preference which every one gives to his own country and all that pertains to it, that is founded the wager between Posthumus and Iachimo. Each asserts the superiority of the ladies of his own land. This national pride, a species of sympathy arising from difference of locality, is largely illus-



trated throughout the piece, as it conspicuously violates the universal sympathy which should exist between men as men. Confined, however, within proper bounds, it is admirable. The following are some examples. Not to speak of the patriotic spirit that breathes through the addresses of Cymbeline and the Queen in reply to the Roman ambassador's demand for tribute, how finely Roman is the brief comment made by Lucius upon the sentence of death passed upon him : —

“ Sufficeth

A Roman with a Roman's heart can suffer ;  
Augustus lives to think on it.”

Pisanio avows his determination to die for his country : —

“ These present wars shall find I love my country  
Even to the note o' the king, or I'll die in them,” —

and Iachimo attributes even to the air of Britain an antipathy to him on account of the injuries done by him to Imogen : —

“ I have belied a lady,  
The princess of this country, and the air on 't  
Revengingly enfeebles me.”

Even Cloten exhibits patriotism. It is noteworthy, however, that Imogen, the princess of Britain, in whose well-balanced character all proper sympathies have place, but in which no excess of feeling begets a false pride, shows her sound judgment in the liberal sentiment with which, with a true love for her own land, she still makes a fair estimate of others.

“ Hath Britain all the sun that shines ? Day, night,  
Are they not but in Britain ? I' the world's volume  
Our Britain seems as of 't, but not in it,  
In a great pool a swan's nest. Prythee think  
There 's livers out of Britain.”

It being the object of History to assign the causes of events, and award to each actor on the historical stage the rank to which his merits entitle him, it only does in a literary and artistic way for the men of the past what every man within his own sphere is constantly doing throughout his life with regard to the men of the present, that is, judging their actions, motives, plans, and purposes, and assigning to each actor the place he may justly claim. This play, therefore, in which the relation of Man to Rank or

Difference of Place is the subject, is an epitome of History and of the principles by which it makes up its record ; in other words, it takes the " form " or idea of History as its constructive law.

But to render *Cymbeline* a dramatic embodiment of such principles, it must present them in the *concrete* and in *present* action. What in History is past experience must become in the play a present trial ; what History represents as accomplished ends must be seen as operative causes ; what History sets forth as a complication of purposes steadily tending to a predestined end must appear in the play as a network of intrigue involving the characters in the greatest perplexities and subjecting them to the apparent dominion of Chance ; what in History is philosophical comment upon a series of events must become moral reflections or maxims of prudence suggested by particular incidents ; what in History are citations of written authorities must in its dramatic imitation be oral narratives of individual experiences. All these conditions are satisfied in *Cymbeline*. It is a record of trials that test the relative worth and force of the characters ; it lays its scenes in various and distant places from which move different trains of causes and effects, giving rise by mutual interaction to the greatest perplexities, and producing the strangest chances ; it exhibits characters whose discourse is rich in aphorisms and whose judgments are guided by the lessons of experience ; it shows private purposes made providentially conducive to great national ends ; and it concludes by assembling together from distant quarters and by a great variety of motives all the characters, whose narratives of what they each know or have experienced, like the scattered proofs of History collected to one point, make up the full record of the truth, placing each personage in a proper position and showing the connection and dependency of the events so as to account for the final result as well as for all the varied action of the piece.

This wild legend, therefore, in which " the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life " (to adopt the letter, though not the spirit of Johnson's sweeping condemnation of the play) appear to be designed only as romantic features, which with exquisite taste the poet stamps upon his chronicle, is an epitome of the principles on which History makes its statements and founds its decisions upon men and events.

History, inasmuch as it treats of past transactions, necessarily grounds its judgments upon testimony or the relations of others; whereas, in the daily intercourse of practical life, which is History, living and present (and of which *Cymbeline* is an image) men meet face to face and judge of each other by personal observation. In this respect, the conclusions they form are similar to those arrived at in natural Science, which decides upon the qualities and properties of objects by test and experiment. A collection of such experiments is what Bacon terms a Natural History, and *Cymbeline*, so far as it records the trials and experiences of its personages and the development of their instincts, is a *Natural History of Sympathy and Antipathy in Man*.

But this latter is wrapped up in the more general Chronicle-History that forms the acting play.

In the moral as in the material world, experience is the only sure ground of truth, but with regard to moral facts, the instincts and sympathies of the heart are an intuitive or spontaneous experience, which springs to life at a touch and is coextensive with the moral nature of man. It is, in fact, self-knowledge, and is seated in the conscience, and we decide upon the motives of others under given circumstances with all the confidence the conscience passes judgment upon our own. In imagination, we put ourselves in their place. This principle is the ground of our belief in all statement of moral fact and of our sympathy with all delineations of human nature, whether in history or fiction. Aside from the observations of our senses and the intuition of our hearts, we have no assurance of the truth. All the rest of our knowledge we take upon testimony, but testimony receives credit in the vast majority of instances only so far as it is conformable to our experience.

The instinctive power of sympathy to realize what we have never seen and know only through the relation of another, is beautifully exemplified in the fire and spirit with which the young princes put into action the stories of the old soldier, Belarius.

“This Polydore,

The heir of Cymbeline and Britain, whom

The king his father call'd Guiderius, — Iove!

When on my three-foot stool I sit, and tell

The warlike feats I've done, his spirits fly out

Into my story, say: 'Thus mine enemy fell



And thus I set my foot on 's neck," even then  
 The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats,  
 Strains his young nerves, and puts himself in posture  
 That acts my words. The younger brother, Cadwal,  
 (Once Arviragus) in as like figure  
 Strikes life into my speech and shows much more  
 His own conceiving."

Act III. Sc. 3.

Against the inward assurances and perfect convictions wrought by experience, no written nor verbal statement nor other secondary evidence derived from mere external signs should be allowed to prevail. It is Posthumus's neglect of such an *experience* as evidence of Imogen's truth and his reliance upon *inferences* from deceptive outward proofs of her incontinency that give rise to the main interest and tragic incidents of the play. Iachimo's story and oath, and particularly his possession of the bracelet, are to Posthumus a conclusive proof of his wife's guilt. It is "the *cognizance* of her incontinency." Yet had he interpreted this sign by the experience<sup>1</sup> he himself recounts, and which prove her "as chaste as unsunn'd snow" (see Act II. Sc. 5), neither Iachimo's crafty story nor the possession of the jewel could have imposed upon his judgment nor brought him to any conclusion but that some deep villainy had been practiced.

On the other hand, the use of signs and tokens as corroborative testimonies of a true report are instanced in the mole upon the neck of Guiderius and in the mantle in which Arviragus was wrapped.

"*Bel.* This gentleman, my Cadwal, Arviragus,  
 Your younger princely son ; he, sir, was lapp'd  
 In a most curious mantle, wrought by the hand  
 Of his queen mother, which, for more probation,  
 I can, with ease produce.

*Cym.* Guiderius had  
 Upon his neck a mole, a sanguine star ;  
 It was a mark of wonder.

<sup>1</sup> In Boccaccio's story (9 Nov., 2 Day) the unquestionable original of the most striking part of the plot of *Cymbeline*, the injured wife, after having drawn her husband and the villain who had slandered her into her power, upbraids the former for having placed more confidence in the *falsehoods* of a stranger than in the *experience* he had of her truth. The original runs thus: "Il marito, più credulo alle altrui falsità che alla verità da lui per l'eme esperienza potuta conoscere, la fa accidere." This passage, together with the mode of proof adopted by Ambrogio, the Iachimo of the story, by *signs and notes*, seems to have suggested to the dramatist the fitness of the story to illustrate the art of judging (which treats of proofs) including the spirit, not to say the letter, of the Inductive Logic.

*Bel.* This is he  
 Who hath upon him still that *natural stamp* :  
 It was *wise nature's end* in the donation  
 To be his *evidence now.*"

Act V., Sc. 5.

A Chronicle-History has two sides, one of Civil History and one of Romance. Of these, the first is represented in the play by the scenes between Cymbeline and Lucius, the Roman Ambassador, in which the latter demands the payment of tribute and declares war; and also in the landing of the Roman army at Milford and the subsequent battle with the Britons. The Romance of the play is represented in the private fortunes and adventures of the personages of the piece; and with reference to these and their private relations, the law of universal love which is applicable in its broadest features to men standing in international relations, becomes more specific and definite. In treating of the "Exemplar of Good" or the idea of moral goodness, Bacon speaks of "the good of man, which respecteth or beholdeth society and which goes by the name of *Duty*, which is subdivided into the common duty of every man as a member of the State; the other, the *respective* duty or the duty of every man in his *profession, vocation, and place.*" And he instances as appertaining to this branch of morality "the duties of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, as likewise the laws of friendship, of gratitude, neighborhood, and all other *proportionate duties.*"

It is obvious at a glance that these are precisely the relations which exist between the principal personages of the piece and which call distinctly for "proportionate duties." But duties, that is, love and service, are proportionate when suited to each particular case; and therefore the great law of sympathy with respect to private relations may be stated as the rendering of that love and service which is suitable in every respect to the relations in which we are placed. It implies the proper ascendancy of the reason over the sympathies and passions. It is the rule of congruity and fitness; "*the fair and fit*" in morals as in manners; the strict and habitual observance of which constitutes a character to which the world has ever been ready to award *supreme rank* — the perfect gentleman or lady.

In the characters of the play, we must look for embodiments of the main principles embraced by the moral scheme of the piece. This scheme is an expansion of the fundamental idea, which, in

the case of *Cymbeline*, is that of History or a true judgment on men by proof and experience. This grows out of our instinctive desire to know the qualities of the men we encounter and deal with in order that we may judge of their worth and rank them accordingly. But to do this with precision requires a judgment free from bias and error, whereas it is often, not to say always, unduly swayed by *sympathies* and *antipathies*, or say, affections and passions, which make false estimates of men and things. The personages of the piece will, therefore, be differenced by the *correct* or *incorrect exercise of their judgments* upon men and the objects of their love and hate generally.

But besides this metaphysical basis of the character, the personages have also a poetic side or one colored by circumstances, which gives them respectively an individuality and special portraiture, but these two sides so concur that the one generally elucidates the other. Being offshoots of the same main trunk, the *dramatis personæ* are all necessarily related, though superficially they may be greatly diversified.

In Imogen, we have an impersonation of the organic idea, *the fair and fit*, which practically is conduct that, by a *perfectly correct exercise of the judgment*, befits the situation in which the agent is placed.

Exquisite beauty of person, the manners of a princess and the skill of a housewife, a playful fancy, deep feeling, rare courage and magnanimity, are qualities which blend as adjuncts or embellishments with a love and truth no trials can shake to form the character of Imogen the gentlewoman or, more technically, "*the lady*." But that which is rarest in her character is the perfect balance of her faculties; both in thought and action she exhibits the just and proper ascendancy of reason. A princess by birth, she yet holds rank for nothing in comparison with moral worth. Her mind habitually harbors noble thoughts; she is magnanimous without effort. To her great heart, a kingdom is but a toy compared with the vast space filled by a brother's love. When the king, upon the restoration of the princes, tells her, —

"Imogen,

By this you have *lost a kingdom*,"

she replies, —

"No, my lord.

I've *gain'd two worlds* by it," —



a mode of reckoning that measures rather the greatness of the soul that uses it than the profit or loss of the exchange mentioned.

An impersonation of truth and love, she is the pattern of courtesy, the rule of nobleness. Though she is a king's daughter, her ladyhood is of higher descent. Like Chaucer's gentlewoman, —

“Her bountie (goodness) cometh all of God, we of the strain  
Of which she was ygendred and ybore ;”

and her truth and sympathy and readiness to serve, like her beauty, shine with as bright a lustre in the cave of the outlaws as in the court of Cymbeline. Her conventional rank seems never present to her mind, but when her disdain is aroused by baseness, then her assumption of dignity as a princess gives double force to her scorn.

An intimate blending of the action of the heart and head, a union of sweetness and strength, is the marked characteristic of her nature. Her faculties are in perfect equipoise ; neither feeling nor fancy clouds her judgment ; nor does her judgment unduly repress the impulses of her heart. Reflection and feeling with her go hand-in-hand, and in her direst extremities every experience is transmuted by her active mind into moral truth. Her soliloquy, when she is lost in the forest and at point to perish with hunger, is a good instance of this perfect balance of sensibility and judgment.

“Two beggars told me

I could not lose my way : *will poor folks lie,*  
*That have afflictions on them, knowing 't is*  
*A punishment or trial ?* Yes : no wonder,  
When rich ones scarce tell true. *To lapse in fullness*  
*Is sorer than to lie for need ; and falsehood*  
*Is worse in kings than beggars.* *My dear lord !*  
*Thou art one of the false ones.* *Now I think on thee,*  
*My hunger's gone ;* but even before, I was  
At point to sink for food. But what is this ?  
Here is a path to it ; 't is some savage hold :  
I were best not call ; I dare not call : *yet famine*  
*Ere clean it o'erthrow nature makes it valiant.*  
*Plenty and peace breed cowards : hardness ever*  
*Of hardness is mother.”*

Act III. Sc. 6.

The same harmonious action of mind and feeling is also well illustrated in the following lines, in which moreover is enunciated the radical truth that experience is the corrective of false testimony and the only sure source of knowledge.

"These are kind creatures. Gods, *what lies I've heard!*  
 Our courtiers say all's savage but at court :  
*Experience, O, thou disprov'st report!*  
 The imperious seas breed monsters, for the dish  
 Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish."

This clear apprehension of the truth of things gives Imogen wonderful force. Her trials but make her wiser and stronger, and our pity for her distress is in a manner checked by our admiration of her moral strength. She is as practical withal as she is reflective and her executive ability corresponds with her ready sympathy and prompt judgment. Under the greatest afflictions she gives up to no useless grief, but burying her feelings in her heart, turns with courage and industry to the next duty that offers. In her strength of character she is independent of circumstances and superior to chance or change.

"Every attempt  
 She's soldier to and does abide it  
 With a prince's courage."

After the murder, as she thinks it, of her husband, she enters, disguised as a boy, into the service of Lucius, a noble Roman, who thus describes her:—

"Never master had  
 A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,  
 So tender over his occasions, true,  
 So feat, so nurse-like."

Act. V. Sc. 5.

With such fitness does this true lady act her part in whatever strange or unnatural sphere fortune may cast her!

So, again, in the cave of Belarius, her housewifely skill is put before us, while her "angel-like" singing reminds us of her courtly education.

"How angel-like he sings!  
 But his *neat cookery* !<sup>1</sup> He cut our roots in characters  
 And sauc'd our broths, as Juno had been sick  
 And he her dieter."

Act IV. Sc. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Imogen's cookery, though tasteful in every sense of the word, draws a sneer from the Female Quixote; and the commentators, through fear that this accomplishment may vulgarize the character, hasten to explain that cooking formed part of the education of a princess in those early days. But why go back so far? Our receipt books tell us that the cheese-cakes known as "Maids of Honor," were so called from the skill with which they were compounded by the high-born dames that formed the stately court of Elizabeth!

Thus she is always in harmony with her situation and renders whatever good service it calls for. Her judgment, though sometimes misled by ignorance of facts or deceptions of the sense, never errs in matters of conduct. Her first words show how clearly she reads the dissimulation of the smooth-tongued Queen.

"O *dissembling courtesy* ! how fine this tyrant  
Can tickle where she wounds."

Act I. Sc. 2.

With regard to her own actions, she always decides upon what is fittest. Upon receiving tidings that her husband is at Milford and desires her presence she expresses her joy as well as the fondness of her love in the playful impatience she affects at the length of time required for the journey ; but as soon as this indulgence of feeling has reached the limit of decorum, her practical judgment steps in and decides her course.

"But *this is foolery* :

Go, bid my woman feign a sickness : say  
She'll home to her father : and provide me presently  
A riding-suit, no costlier than would fit  
A franklin's housewife."

Act III. Sc. 2.

The more the character of Imogen is submitted to the test, the finer it shows. Her severest trial proceeds from the jealousy of Posthumus. Ignorant of the villainy that has been practiced upon him, and recalling the slanders of Iachimo, she can see in his charges against her honor and in his orders that she be put to death only proofs of his own perjury. Every circumstance of the situation tends to awaken a sense of injury and justify resentment ; yet, notwithstanding this terrible wound to her love, she retains her sweetness of nature. Her grief is wholly unselfish, and she pours out her profound sorrow over the wreck of her husband's honor without one trace of angry or jealous or vindictive feeling. She mourns over it as destroying all faith in whatever is goodly or gallant in man, but utters no word of personal resentment. This forbearance seems due less to self-command than to an innate nobility of disposition that is incapable of any unhandsome or undignified feeling. Struck to the heart by his apparent cruelty and injustice as she is, death would be a relief ; but with her, true heroism consists in living and acting, not in yielding to despair. As soon as Pisanio suggests that Posthumus has been made the victim of some villainous practice and points



out a course whereby the truth may be discovered, she embraces the plan; and strong in acting as in suffering, enters with fortitude upon its execution. With all the sensibility that befits a heroine of romance, she is devoid of every morbid feeling and is governed on all occasions by a practical common sense.

The unerring judgment which ensures such supreme fitness of conduct carries all our sympathies with her. She is always admirable; and her actions are a succession of surprises for their nobleness and generosity.

After all the trials she endures from her husband's injustice, the only reproach that falls from her lips is the affectionate remonstrance:—

“Why did you cast your wedded lady from you?”

And at last, when restored to her position as a princess and to her father's favor, her graceful promise to the captive Lucius is a closing instance of that sympathy and readiness to serve, which are the soul of goodness and courtesy.

“My good master,  
I will yet do you service.”

Act V. Sc. 5.

No touch is omitted that can lend a grace to this lofty and lovely lady; she lives and moves in an atmosphere of beauty; and even old Belarius, when he sees his cave lighted up by her presence, exclaims:—

“By Jupiter, an angel, or if not,  
An earthly paragon! Behold divineness  
No elder than a boy.”

Act III. Sc. 6.

Yet so noble are all the impulses of her being, so sweet and winning is she by force of unswerving love and truth, that her personal loveliness grows dim by the side of the diviner beauty of her nature.

A pattern of ladyhood and true nobility, she embodies “the fair and fit”—or in the language of the play,—

“The temple of virtue is she; yea, and she herself.”

Act V. Sc. 5.

It is apparent that Imogen's life is one series of trials, viz., the anger of her father, the machinations of the Queen, the banishment of her husband, the suit of Cloten, the villainy of Iachimo, the orders of Posthumus that she be slain, the hardships of her

wanderings; all these and others are calculated to test her truth, love, courage, and constancy, yet all serve to prove her incomparable worth. She escapes because her judgment is never deceived, with but one exception — that of a false induction which will be noticed further on.

As in Imogen high birth is fitly matched with exalted worth, so, on the other hand, in Cloten is found the incongruous union of lofty rank and a vile nature. Malevolent, sordid, discourteous, brutal, vindictive, he is a type of baseness, the antithesis of a gentleman. He represents the *un-fit* and the *un-fair*. Without kindness of nature, he is equally devoid of judgment and is a bundle of incongruities, being at once a fop and a ruffian, a villain and a fool. His malevolence is indicated in his first exclamation, "Have I *hurt him?*" "*Would there had been some hurt done!*" an allusion to his base and unprovoked assault upon the exiled Posthumus. He is throughout antipathetic and excites antipathy in others. He seems subject to a chronic anger; through violence of temper, he foams at mouth and has "snatches in his voice and bursts of speaking."<sup>1</sup> If he is ever merry, it is in view of some gratification of his malice. He can learn nothing from experience. An occasional gleam of sense shoots athwart the fog of his mind and at times he affects method in his plans; but in general, he drifts without rudder or guidance. His motives are always bad or foolish. "Having no apprehension of roaring terrors for *defect of judgment*" he undertakes the absurdest projects. He is utterly unable to proportion means to ends. He will conquer Cæsar with a grip of his hand. He is "the irregular devil, Cloten."

Upon his station he sets the highest value without the slightest appreciation of its dignity. His nobility consists, not in noble conduct, but in belonging to a certain class or moving in a certain set. "Is it fit that I went to look upon him? Is there *no derogation in it?*" he asks with regard to the newly-arrived Iachimo.

<sup>1</sup> The portrait which Suetonius gives of the emperor Claudius bears in some respects a strong resemblance to that of Cloten, — as in his fine person but revolting face, his cruel nature, his love of gambling, but especially in the peculiarities mentioned in the text, that is, foaming at the mouth and snatches in his voice, etc: —

"*Nam et prolixo nec exili corpore erat . . . risus indecens; ira turpior, spumante rictu . . . præterea lingue titubantia . . . aleam studiosissime lusit . . . sævum naturæ fuisse,*" etc.

Could the name *Cloten* have been suggested by that of *Claudius*?

That he is "son to the Queen" is the uppermost thought in his mind. Yet, after all, he wishes he was "not so noble as he is" in order that he may fight with every "jack-slave" he chooses to offend. His conception of a gentleman is to insult his inferiors, wear rich clothes, and be as profane as he pleases. With no sense of fitness, his self-esteem is excessive and shows that he has no knowledge either of others or himself. A suitor for Imogen's love he thus estimates himself in comparison with Posthumus.

"I dare speak it to myself (for it is not vain-glory for a man and his glass to confer in his own chamber), I mean, the lines of my body are as well drawn as his, no less young, more strong, not beneath him in fortunes, beyond him in the advantage of the time, above him in birth, alike conversant in general services, and more remarkable in single oppositions: yet this imperceiverant thing loves him in my despite."

It does not occur to Cloten that love can depend at all on moral qualities. Imogen's preference for his rival—which he attributes to her want of judgment—excites his hate.

"Disdaining me and throwing favors on  
The low Posthumus, *slanders so her judgment*  
That what 's else rare is chok'd; and in that point  
I will conclude to hate her, nay, indeed,  
To be reveng'd upon her."

Act. III. Sc. 5.

His reviling of Posthumus on the score of his low estate draws from Imogen an expression of indignant scorn, the sting of which lies in the judgment she passes upon the *comparative worth* and consequent rank of the two men.

"Profane fellow!

Wert thou *the son of Jupiter*, and no more  
But what thou art besides, thou wert too base  
To be his groom: thou wert dignified enough,  
Even to the point of envy, if 't were made  
*Comparative for your virtues*, to be styled  
The under-hangman of his kingdom, and hated  
For being preferr'd so well.

Act. II. Sc. 3.

Learning that Imogen has fled to meet her husband, Cloten follows her with the intent of slaying Posthumus, and, after the most revolting atrocities, to "knock" her and "foot" her home to her father. He sets out for Milford, finds the cave of Belarius,



encounters Guiderius, whom he seeks to terrify by announcing himself as "son to the Queen;" but here, in the depths of the forest, when the false gentleman and the true one are brought face to face, nothing but genuine manhood will avail; and Cloten is quickly dispatched with his own sword. Guiderius' estimate is pertinent.

*"This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse;  
There was no money in't."*

In all matters in which Cloten is tested, he proves himself a fool; he has no sense of the proportion between effect and cause, or between consequence and premise; in short, he has no judgment.

Another shadow which lends effect to the brightness of Imogen is the character of the Queen. She impersonates the spirit of social ambition, the love of rank, and the dark dissimulation of court intrigue. Her craft is in contrast with Imogen's truth. Nothing has value for the Queen but *Place*. She wheedles herself into the affections of the king, but

*"Marries his royalty, is wife to his place,  
Abhors his person."*

The Queen is a profound judge of character; her approaches to Pisanio with a view of corrupting his fidelity are a masterpiece of dissimulation, and her instructions to Cloten as to the mode of wooing Imogen prove her an adept in the arts of the courtier.

Smooth and insinuating, she hides under flattering words the deadliest malice. She overflows with affected sympathy and false promises of service and preferment. She is inquisitive, moreover, in matters of natural science, and experiments with drugs that she may learn their virtues and effects. Her duplicity is painted by a most felicitous touch, which represents her as gathering flowers, "violets, cowslips, and primroses," for the purpose of distilling poisons from them. In her employ is Cornelius, a physician, from whom she takes lessons in chemical knowledge. She studies poisons, she alleges, that she may discover antidotes and thus speaks of her scientific acquirements and tastes.

*"Queen.*

Have I not been

Thy pupil long? Hast thou not learn'd me how

To make perfumes? distil? preserve? yea, so

That our great king himself doth woo me oft

For my confections? Having thus far proceeded

(Unless thou think'st me devilish) is 't not meet  
 That I did *amplify my judgment in*  
 Other conclusions? <sup>1</sup> I will *try* the forces  
 Of these thy compounds on such creatures as  
 We count not worth the hanging (but none human)  
 To *try* the *vigor of them*, and *apply*  
*Allayments to their act*; and by them gather  
 Their *several virtues and effects*."

Act. I. Sc. 6.

The Queen's plan of marrying Cloten to Imogen is baffled by the flight of the latter. Adopting, therefore, another course and turning her experiments in chemistry to account, she prepares for the king —

"A mortal mineral, which, being took,  
 Should by the minute feed on life and ling'ring  
 By inches waste him. In which time she purpos'd  
 By *watching, weeping, tendance, kissing*, to  
*O'ercome him with her show*: yea, in time  
 (When she had fitted him with her craft) to work  
 Her son into the adoption of the crown."

Act. V. Sc. 5.

Still she is overruled by the consequences of her own acts. Imogen's flight causes the sudden and secret disappearance of Cloten, who is determined to pursue the princess "even to Augustus' throne." His mysterious and prolonged absence throws the Queen into a fever. Her disappointed craft and ambition left without an object, overthrow her judgment and drive her from her closeness and dissimulation. She confesses her crimes; and so "she ended

"With horror, madly dying, like her life,  
 Which, being cruel to the world, concluded  
 Most cruel to herself."

Act. V. Sc. 5.

The characters of Posthumus and Iachimo bring out by force of contrast the two opposite errors of *credulity* and *skepticism*, into which the judgment is led, when unguided by experience. The first, through inexperience of the world, believes men to be more true than they actually are; the second through vicious associations has so little experience of virtue that he denies its existence altogether. These opposite errors are put in the strongest light by the wager respecting Imogen. All wagers grow out of a dif-

<sup>1</sup> Conclusions, i. e. experiments.

ference of judgment on some point, which the parties agree shall be determined by a practical test. Posthumus' knowledge of Imogen's character renders him confident that Iachimo will sustain a repulse, while on the other hand, Iachimo's experience as a libertine leads him to think the attempt an easy task. In this he greatly misjudges, but his craft enables him by bold falsehoods and fraudulent proofs to impose a belief of his success on Posthumus, who, utterly unversed in the deceptions of the world, allows his feelings to be played upon and yields up his better judgment with easy credulity. An astute philosopher says: "It is acquired wisdom and experience only that teach incredulity, and they very seldom teach it enough. The wisest and most cautious of us all frequently gives credit to stories which he himself is afterwards ashamed and astonished that he could possibly think of believing."<sup>1</sup>

Bacon, in treating of the duties arising out of man's relation to place, says in that fine scholastic style which he adopted as appropriate to his subject, when writing on *The Advancement of Learning*: "There belongeth further to the handling of this part touching the duties of professions and vocations, a relative or opposite touching the frauds, cautels, impostures, and vices of every profession. For it is not possible to join serpentine wisdom with the columbine innocence, except one knows all the conditions of the serpent, his baseness and going upon his belly, his volubility and lubricity, his envy and sting and the rest, for without this, virtue lies open and unfenced."

And, again, he says: "The sinews of wisdom are slowness of belief and distrust."

These truths are exemplified, negatively, in Posthumus. Of a high sense of honor, he has none of that slowness of belief which makes men wise in their dealings. Ignorance of the deceits of the world leaves him "open and unfenced" against the devilish cunning, "the volubility and lubricity" of the villainous Iachimo, who first taunts and goads him into a wager, and then hoodwinks his judgment by mere outward shows and "simular proofs" of success.

The highest eulogy that can be passed upon Posthumus is the fact that Imogen, who had known him from childhood, and who thoroughly understood his character, chose him for a husband.

<sup>1</sup> Adam Smith.



This act excites much criticism upon the soundness of her judgment, it being precisely that step in life which ought most to be guided by counsel and experience, but which is generally taken under the influence of feeling. Her father, whose pride of blood is terribly outraged by it, thinks it madness ; but her reply is conclusive.

“ Sir,  
It is your fault that I have lov’d Posthumus :  
You bred him as my playfellow ; and he is  
*A man worth any woman ; overbuys me  
Almost the sum he pays.*”

And a gentleman of the Court, commenting on the match, says : —

“ *Her own price*  
Proclaims how *she esteemed him and his virtue ;*  
By her election may be truly read  
What kind of man he is.”

Banished by Cymbeline, Posthumus retires to Rome, where at the house of one Philario, he meets with certain gentlemen of different countries, who profess to know the world and to be altogether too well versed in the real value of things to have any special belief in the merit or worth of either man or woman. Their skeptical spirit is displayed in the tone, with which, before the entry of Posthumus, they pass judgment on his qualities and criticise the testimony respecting him.

*Iachimo.* Believe it, sir, I have seen him in Britain : he was then of a crescent note ; expected to prove so worthy, as since he hath been allowed the name of ; but I could then have looked on him without the help of admiration, though the catalogue of his endowments had been tabled by his side and I to peruse him by items.

*Philario.* You speak of him when he was less furnish’d than now he is with that which makes him both without and within.

*Frenchman.* I have seen him in France : we had very many there could behold the sun with as firm eyes as he.

*Iach.* This matter of marrying his king’s daughter (wherein he must be weigh’d rather by her value than his own) words him, I doubt not, a great deal from the matter.

*French.* And then his banishment —

*Iach.* Ay, and the approbation of those that weep this lamentable divorce under her colors are wonderfully to extend him, be it but to fortify her judgment, which else an easy battery might lay flat, for taking a beggar without more quality. Act I. Sc. 4.

Upon the entrance of Posthumus, the Frenchman claims a previous acquaintance with him, and reminds him of an altercation in which Posthumus had been engaged with a French gentleman respecting the comparative worth of their "country mistresses," Posthumus averring his "to be more fair, courteous, chaste, wise, constant, qualified and less attemptable than any the rarest ladies of France." He, however, reproaches himself that when a young traveller he "rather shunn'd to go even with what he heard than in his every act to be guided by others' experiences," that is, he refused to be guided by wiser men than himself; but at the time of speaking, he claims that "his judgment is mended." Herein he deceives himself, for his judgment is subject to passion and his conclusions are hasty. He is, no doubt, justly incensed by the imputation indirectly thrown upon the honor of his wife by Iachimo, who, however, "bars his offense therein" by declaring that "he durst attempt any lady in the world," but in the excitement of the moment, he is drawn by the cool cunning of the Italian into a wager upon Imogen's virtue. This is his error; he permits his feelings to sway his judgment and even dares Iachimo to the match.

In the scene, too, in which Iachimo claims to have won the wager, the want of balance in Posthumus' mind is conspicuous. His excited feelings blind his judgment and he allows the inward moral conviction which his personal experience had given him of Imogen's perfect truth to be overborne by the story and oath of a stranger, supported only by the slight and delusive evidence of signs and shows. Well might Imogen exclaim when she first hears of the accusation against her, "I false? *Thy conscience witness!*" Unpracticed in the treachery of the world, he is wholly overmatched by the subtle Italian. With so much skill does Iachimo array the proof and exhibit the bracelet as conclusive of success, that Posthumus, upon his friend Philario's suggesting that the bracelet may have been lost by Imogen or stolen by one of her women, falls into the absurdity of believing her attendants too honorable to be induced by a stranger to steal the jewel, yet his wife too little honorable not to be induced by that same stranger to do infinitely worse, and present it to him as a token of favor. He says:—

"She would not lose it: her attendants are  
All sworn and honorable: they induced to steal it,  
And by a stranger! *No.*"

A more striking picture of passion destroying the judgment could hardly be painted.

And, again, his friend Philario endeavors to check his hasty conclusions : —

“Sir, be patient :  
This is not *strong enough to be believ'd*  
*Of one persuaded well of*” —

But Posthumus will listen to no remonstrance. Wrought to madness by the torture to which Iachimo subjects him, he tells his friend to talk no more, even threatens to kill Iachimo if he deny that he has dishonored him, and “quite beside the government of patience” breaks away to vent his feelings in a soliloquy, in which he embraces all womankind, including his own mother, in one sweeping indiscriminate condemnation. This soliloquy is a fine instance of that influence of sympathy which causes a passion, particularly resentment, to include within its scope all that is associated or supposed to be in sympathy with its main object.

In the anguish of his mind, he orders his wife to be put to death. Deceived again by false signs and proofs and made to believe that his orders have been executed, he is overwhelmed with remorse, which rises, upon his being assured of Imogen's innocence, into self-execration, — a terrible feeling, which is, in fact, our own sympathy with the hate engendered by our evil deeds.

“Ah me, most credulous fool,  
Egregious murderer, thief, any thing  
That's due to all the villains past, in being,  
To come ! . . .  
Spit, and throw stones, cast mire upon me, set  
The dogs o' the street to bay me : every villain  
Be call'd Posthumus Leonatus ; and  
Be villainy less than 't was !”

Act V. Sc. 5.

But trial at last chastens him and makes him wise in feeling and judgment ; and he then reveals that nobility of nature which justifies Imogen's choice of him as a husband.

His faults are attributable to hastiness of judgment, arising from inexperience and ignorance of men.

On the other hand, Iachimo, a cool, accomplished man of the world, a heartless libertine, audacious, cunning, and fluent, has through the teachings of a licentious life become utterly skeptical



of the existence of woman's virtue. His one-sided experience has led him to believe that "if you buy ladies' flesh at a *million a drachm* you cannot preserve it from tainting." This skepticism is an error as great and misleads the judgment as grossly as the excessive credulity instanced in Posthumus. He is of the opinion that Bacon expressed (though not as truth), "that love is a *wild fowl*, in which *property* passes with *possession*;" for he says to Posthumus in reference to Imogen: "You may wear her *in title yours*, but you know *strange fowl* light on neighboring ponds."

The scene between Iachimo and Imogen is an illustration of that species of sympathy by which all acting and simulation are practiced. In it, Iachimo shows himself master of the arts of the libertine. He attacks the character of Posthumus by affecting astonishment at his want of judgment in preferring to Imogen one of so little comparative worth as her supposed rival, "a tom-boy," for whom he is alleged to have sold Imogen's interest and his own honor. By this means, he hopes to arouse the lady's pride, and with great address, imputes to her husband the same unbelief in woman's virtue, which he had himself professed at the time of the wager.

"The jolly Briton,  
(Your lord, I mean) laughs from 's free lungs, cries Q!  
Can my sides hold to think that man, — who knows  
By *history*, *report*, or his *own proof*  
What woman is, yea, what she cannot choose  
But must be, — will his free hours languish  
For assur'd bondage."

Act I. Sc. 7.

Imogen is at first deceived by the consummate acting of the Italian, but as soon as he hints revenge, she reads his whole meaning, and spurns him with the utmost contempt. After Iachimo's strained and elaborate speeches, the hyperbole of which is symbolical of the tendency of all insincerity to exaggerate, and which, moreover, by extreme disproportion of the figures used for illustrating Posthumus' defect of judgment, falls into what may be called a rhetorical inverse ratio, as for instance, —

"What!  
To hide me from the *radiant sun* and solace  
In a *dungeon* by a *snuff*" —

it is curious to observe how simple and perfectly balanced are the phrases that convey the scorn of the truthful Imogen. They take

the form of an equation and are expressed in the directest language.

“If thou wert honorable,  
Thou would'st have told this tale for virtue, not  
For such an end thou seek'st ; *as base, as strange.*  
Thou wrong'st a gentleman, who is *as far*  
*From thy report as thou from honor* ; and  
Solicit'st here a lady, that disdains  
*Thee and the devil alike.*”

Act I. Sc. 7.

Being thus rebuffed, the wily Italian at once converts his villainy into the means of extricating himself from the hazard he had incurred. He breaks forth to Imogen in eloquent praise of her husband and avers that his attempt was but *an experiment*, which, as a friend of Posthumus, he had made to try her fidelity.

“Be not angry,  
Most mighty Princess, that I have *adventur'd*  
*To try your taking of a false report* ; which hath  
*Honor'd with confirmation your great judgment*  
In the election of a sir so rare  
Which, you know, cannot err.”

Act I. Sc. 7.

To win the bet, Iachimo has recourse to treachery. By a bold stratagem, he gains access to Imogen's chamber, of which he takes notes that he may use them as proofs of his success. He also gets possession of her bracelet, which is his main proof. It is the apparent “cognizance” of her guilt. When he slips it off the arm of the sleeping lady, he says : —

“Come off, come off :  
As slippery as the Gordian knot was hard !  
'Tis mine ; and this will *witness outwardly,*  
*As strongly as the conscience does within,*  
To the madding of her lord.”

Act II. Sc. 2.

In this he truly reads Posthumus' character. The display of this jewel, his own gift to Imogen, maddens Posthumus, and Iachimo wins the ring which formed the stake. But it is a fatal success. The ring in its turn becomes to Iachimo the cognizance of his villainy. It witnesses outwardly as strongly as his conscience does within to the infamous treachery with which he had belied an innocent lady. Hardened as is his heart by worldliness, there still lingers in him enough of the sentiment and sympathy of a

gentleman to feel remorse and shame. The virtue and dignity of Imogen teach him the wide difference "twixt amorous and villainous," and he becomes penitent through an experience gained in his attempted villainy. His guilt unnerves his arm in battle, and he sinks beneath the sword of Posthumus, who, content with disarming his opponent, spares his life. This mercy has a rich reward. Had Posthumus put him to death, he would have slain the only witness that could fully confirm Imogen's truth. But Iachimo lives to be brought, a prisoner, before Cymbeline, when Imogen espies upon his finger the ring, and this leads to a confession of his guilt and the full vindication of her honor.

Pisanio and Cymbeline are both of them fitted into the piece in the most artistic manner.

Pisanio's is a very beautiful character. It corresponds to that of Imogen. As she is "the lady," he is "the servant" — a servant after the fashion of the antique world when love and vows and duty were the bond of service. A warm heart and sound head, an intense but respectful admiration of his mistress, and a canine fidelity mark a character which is fully representative of Man in relation to Place.

Pisanio has a perfectly balanced judgment, and this gives him a clear insight into character. He reads unerringly the natures of all those he has to do with ; his estimates of Posthumus, of Imogen, of the Queen, of Cloten, of Lucius, are profound and correct ; he even sees through the villainy of Iachimo, although he, of course, knows nothing and can know nothing of the particulars. His character is one of great practical wisdom.

Cymbeline fills his place in the canvas with equal propriety. An uxorious monarch wheedled by an artful and beautiful queen is one of the commonest figures in History. Such is Cymbeline, whose character is made up of sympathy and antipathy in their simplest forms, — love and rage ; love for his wife and children, and rage at the marriage and flight of Imogen. At the close of the piece all his better qualities come uppermost, and as a humane and gracious sovereign he is the central figure of the group. But that which renders his character peculiarly appropriate in this play, which treats of Man in relation to Place, is that nearly all that Cymbeline says and does has reference to the exercise of the prerogative of his office. For instance, he receives ambassadors.

"Mess. So like you, sir, ambassadors from Rome :  
The one is Caius Lucius.





*Companions to our person and will fit you  
With dignities becoming your estates."*

All these are instances of prerogative.

The scenes among the mountains of Wales are those which give the highest romantic coloring to the play. A beautiful princess wandering in the disguise of a boy over mountains and through forests, and falling in by chance with her two long lost brothers, who had been stolen from their cradles and were now living in a cave as hunters; and a sudden attachment springing up between them through the secret sympathy of blood; and her apparent death from taking a powerful drug, and their strewing her body with flowers and singing a dirge and performing other obsequies with a tender, respectful sympathy, are incidents which of themselves contain whole chapters of romance. Yet under the "woodnotes wild" in which these scenes are written, the dominant ideas of the play are particularly resonant. Belarius is the *voice of experience*, giving guidance to the young princes, whose mounting spirits are eager for an opportunity to *gain distinction*, while their love for Fidele and their grief at his death are specially marked as *forms of sympathy*.

Belarius is one to whom a ripe experience has taught the hollowness of the world, but has left untouched his faith in virtue. His mind is rich in aphorisms and habitually draws from natural objects precepts of moral wisdom.

"Up to yon hill.

Your legs are young; I'll tread these flats. Consider  
When you above perceive me like a crow,  
That it is *place that lessens and sets off*:  
And you may then revolve what tales I've told you  
Of courts, of princes, of the tricks of war:  
*That service is not service, so being done,*  
*But being so allow'd: to apprehend thus*  
*Draws us a profit from all things we see."*

Though with the caution of age he checks the ardor of the young princes, their valor excites his admiration, and in acceding to their request to join in the battle he shows the fire of the old soldier.

"Have with you, boys:

If in your country wars you chance to die,  
That is my bed too, lads, and there I'll lie.  
Lead, lead. The time seems long: *their blood thinks scorn*, [*Aside.*  
*Till it fly out and show them princes born."*

The two princes, who think themselves neither better nor worse than mountaineers and outlaws, are fine specimens of "God's gentlemen." They are ideals of those manly virtues, truth, valor, and courtesy, that stamp a natural aristocracy. Their humble standing sets off the loftiness of their natures. They illustrate the theory of blood, birth, and transmissible qualities.

"Though train'd up thus meanly  
I' the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit  
The roofs of palaces."

All aglow with courage, they chafe against the obscurity of their lives. The stories told them of his warlike deeds by the old soldier whom they deem their father prompt irrepressible desires of a similar experience. They too wish to have tales to tell when they are old. But Belarius cautions them against the emptiness of ambition and the ingratitude of the world. They reply:—

"*Guid.* Out of your proof you speak. We poor unfledg'd  
Have never wing'd from view o' the nest; nor know not  
What air 's from home. Haply this life is best  
If quiet life be best."

Imogen, who disregards all factitious distinctions, and prizes only moral worth, clearly reads their nobility of nature.

"Great men  
That had a court no bigger than this cave,  
That did attend themselves, and had the virtue  
Which their own conscience seal'd them—  
Could not out-peer these twain."

Act III. Sc. 6.

The sense of fitness, so conspicuous in the conduct of Imogen, is apparent also in her brothers. It is thus expressed by Guiderius:—

"*Guid.* Where 's my brother?  
*Bel.* My ingenious instrument! [*Solemn music.*  
Hark, Polydore, it sounds: but what occasion  
Hath Cadwal now to give it motion? Hark!  
*Guid.* Is he at home?  
*Bel.* He went hence even now.  
*Guid.* What does he mean? since death of our dear'st mother  
It did not speak before. All solemn things  
Should answer solemn accidents. The matter?  
*Triumphs* for nothing and lamenting toys  
Is jollity for apes and grief for boys.  
*Is Cadwal mad?*"

Act IV. Sc. 2.



From the foregoing analysis (notwithstanding its omissions) it is apparent that the subject of *Cymbeline*, stated summarily, is Man in relation to *Place*, which in the moral scale depends upon his comparative worth, and that a knowledge of this is gained by actual proof or trial, and by interpreting his looks, words, and actions as the outward signs of his inward nature and qualities. Such an interpretation of human nature by actual trial is obviously analogous with Bacon's method, called by him "The Interpretation of Nature," by experience; the philosopher only extending to physical nature at large the process which the dramatist necessarily confines to man.

The well-known Aphorism with which the *Novum Organum* opens, runs as follows: —

"Man, being the servant and intrepeter of nature (*naturæ minister et interpres*) can do and understand so much, and so much only as he has observed in fact or in thought of the course of nature; beyond this he neither knows anything nor can do anything."

"He is *naturæ interpres*," says Mr. Ellis in his Preface to the *Novum Organum*, "because in every object that is presented to him there are *two things* to be considered, or rather two *aspects* of the *same thing*, one, the phenomenon which nature presents to the senses, the other, the *inward mechanism and action*, of which the phenomenon in question is not only the *result*, but also the *outward sign*. To pass therefore from the phenomenon to its *hidden cause* is to interpret the *signs* which enable us to *become acquainted with the operation of nature*."

A pointed instance of this is Imogen's attempt to interpret the looks of Pisanio and pass from them to *their hidden* causes in his mind and feelings: —

"Pisanio! Man!

Where's Posthumus? *What is in thy mind*  
*That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that sigh*  
*From the inward of thee? One, but painted thus,*  
*Would be interpreted a thing perplex'd*  
*Beyond self-explication. Put thyself*  
*Into a havior of less fear, ere wildness*  
*Vanquish my staid senses. What's the matter?*  
*Why tender'st thou that paper to me, with*  
*A look untender? If it be summer news*  
*Smile to 't before; if winterly, thou need'st*  
*But keep that countenance still."*

Act III. Sc. 4.

The analogy, not to say identity, between the interpretation of physical nature and human nature is evident.

But this resemblance is only general, and will not of itself warrant the supposition that there is any connection between the play and such philosophy. For Bacon himself tells us that his scientific induction is not absolutely under all circumstances necessary. His words are: "If men had at their command a proper history of nature and experience, they might, by *the proper and genuine* exertion of their minds, fall into our way of interpretation *without the aid of any art.*" Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 130.

It can very well be, then, that a play might be written representing experience as the sure foundation of knowledge and the true guide of life without the dramatist's ever having heard of Bacon or his system. It must, therefore, be inquired what there was special and technical in Bacon's method, that is, what was the particular form of the history he required, and what was the particular use he made of it, and what the particular Art of Induction he invented, and see whether there is any correspondence between the play and such specialties before a conclusion can be warranted that the play was intended or even that it can be taken to illustrate the Baconian doctrine.

Inductive Philosophy being founded solely on experience, the first and indispensable requisite in Bacon's system is a collection of "the phenomena of nature, that is to say, *experience of every kind* and such a *natural history* as can form a foundation for an edifice of philosophy." This history, however, is not one giving a description of animals, plants, and varieties of species for the instruction or pleasure to be derived from the narrative, but is a compilation and collection of experiments and phenomena of all kinds and drawn from all quarters, to be used as matter for Induction. It required "labor and search and world-wide perambulation" and was wholly unlike any ordinary natural history; Bacon, however, made known nothing of his views on this subject until long after the production of *Cymbeline*.

In the Advancement (A. D. 1605) in which he classifies the sciences, he, of course, speaks of History which he divides into natural and civil. "In natural history, we recount the events and doings of nature; in civil, of men."

Of natural history, he thus discourses: —



"History of nature is of three sorts, of nature *in course*, of nature *erring* or *varying*, and of nature *altered* or *wrought*, that is, history of *creatures*, history of *marvels*, and history of *arts*. The first of these, no doubt, is extant, and that in good perfection; the two latter are handled so weakly and unprofitably as I am moved to *note them as deficient*. For, I find no sufficient or competent collection of the works of nature, which have a *digression* and *deflexion* from the *ordinary course* of *generations*, *productions*, and *motions*, whether they be *singularities of place and region* or the *strange events of time and chance* or the *effects of yet unknown properties* or the *instances of exceptions to general kinds*."

"Neither am I of opinion in this history of marvels, that superstitious narrations of sorceries, witchcraft, *charms*, *dreams*, *divinations*, and the like, where there is an assurance and clear evidence of the fact, be altogether excluded."

It will be observed that in this passage no mention is made of natural history as a basis of philosophy, nor as furnishing matter for induction, nor are any special titles given to the subdivisions of history other than "*nature in course*, *nature erring*, and *nature altered* or *wrought*, or history of *creatures*, of *marvels*, and of *arts*." The *Advancement* was published in 1605, and it was the only work published during Shakespeare's lifetime from which he could have learned Bacon's views on this subject. *Cymbeline* in the form we now have it, was certainly written by or before 1610, and although at or about the period of its production Bacon was writing philosophical tracts in Latin, in which he treats largely of Natural History as a foundation of philosophy, none of them saw the light until long after Shakespeare's death.

In the year 1620 (four years after Shakespeare's death) Bacon published his *Novum Organum*, in which he insists with the greatest weight and emphasis upon the necessity of founding philosophy upon History, that is, experience (Book I. Aph. 98); and to the first edition of that book, he appended a short Latin tract, of which the title made English is "*Preparative for a Natural and Experimental History, or a Description of a Natural and Experimental History such as may serve for the foundation of a true philosophy*."

This tract consists of ten aphorisms in which he lays down



“the plan and rule” to be observed in compiling such a history, and in the first of these he sets forth the different divisions into which Natural History falls, as follows:—

“Natural History is threefold, for it treats either of the liberty of Nature, or of its errors or wanderings, or of its chains.”

[This is virtually the same division he has previously made in the Advancement, but in *The Preparative*, etc., he adds:—]

“So that it may be not improperly divided into the history of *Generations*, of *Præter-generations* and of *Arts*, the latter of which we are wont to call *History Mechanical* or *Experimental*.”

The plan of Bacon's Natural History and its peculiar classification and nomenclature, as well as its use in furnishing materials for induction, were, of course, entirely original with him; indeed, he repeatedly tells us and even complains (*Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 98*) that nothing of the kind had been attempted; yet it is a singular fact that in *Cymbeline* (which, representing life as revealed in our primary instincts, is an image of history in its elements, and so far as it goes, is a Natural History of Sympathy and Antipathy in Man) the topics of the play—and by *topics* is here meant those general heads under which the different subjects of the dialogue can be classified—coincide with the main heads and divisions of Bacon's plan of a History (as a foundation for philosophy), applying and confining to man or human nature what Bacon extends to physical nature at large.

And, first, with respect to Generation, it may be remarked that the whole play, while in its circumstances and situations in the highest degree legendary and improbable, is made up of a series of instances of the more marked forms of sympathy and antipathy, woven with amazing skill into one connected tissue, the most of which are feelings and passions which lie in the ordinary and well-beaten paths of life. They are instances of “nature in course.” To say nothing of the domestic affections, which hold a prominent place in the play, such common modifications of love and hate as admiration, scorn, gratitude, anger, pity, malevolence, love of country, treason, are prevalent throughout the play, and are phenomena which would necessarily enter into a history of sympathy and antipathy in Man.

But *Generation* taken in its direct and usual sense with reference to man is a leading theme of the piece; for the play represents man in relation to place or rank, and contrasts nobility by

birth with nobility of character ; and the notions of birth, blood, stock, family, breeding, descent, and other similar conceptions pervade the play. The chief incidents of the play spring out of feelings connected with these notions. It is the marriage of Imogen, of the blood royal, to Posthumus, who is of inferior stock, that arouses the king's pride of blood, and leads to the banishment of Posthumus. This measure is also instigated by the Queen, who hopes by marrying her son to Imogen, the heiress of the crown, to aggrandize her family ; the wager of Iachimo and Posthumus has direct reference to the same topic, and the soliloquy of Posthumus (Act III. Sc. 5) is particularly in point. In the opening scene, we have a narrative of the circumstances attending the birth of the hero of the piece and of his parentage and breeding, together with the story of the abduction from their nursery of the two children of the king, "one of them at three years old, in the swathing-clothes the other." The very name of the hero, or rather both his names, "Posthumus" and "Leonatus," have reference to his birth. The relation of husband and wife, of parent and child, are the prominent ones of the piece, and the transmission of blood and of the instincts that depend upon it are repeatedly mentioned and notably dwelt upon. Belarius restores the two princes to the king as "the issue of his loins and blood of his begetting," and the introduction of the two "lads" among the characters tends to keep the same notion before the mind. The apparition to Posthumus of his father, mother, and brothers, and their history of his birth, descent, breeding, and marriage, are obviously connected with the same topic. He says : —

"O sleep, thou hast been a *grandsire* and *begot*  
A *father* to me.

The notion of generation appears, moreover, conspicuously in the metaphors and diction. Thus Guiderius expresses his scorn of Cloten : —

"Clo. Know'st me not by my clothes ?  
Guid. No, nor thy tailor, rascal ;  
Who is thy *grandfather* ; he made those clothes  
Which, as it seems, make thee."

Cymbeline, in his joy at the restoration of his children, exclaims :

"Oh what am I,  
A *mother* to the birth of thee ! *ne'er mother*  
*Rejoic'd deliverance* more."



Imogen expresses her desire to meet her husband: —

“ Ne’er long’d my mother so  
To see me first as I do now.”

The introduction of the notion at times renders the metaphor forced and harsh.

Some jay of Italy, whose *mother* was her *painting*.

The most cursory perusal of the play will show that *generation* is in various forms a main topic of the piece. The instances, however, of *generation* or *nature in course* belong more properly to the Natural History of Man on his physical side, while the moral instances are those common forms of sympathy and antipathy, of love and resentment, which, as has been mentioned, make up the habitual current of human feeling. But must not any faithful portrayal of life exhibit similar examples? Necessarily so, to a greater or less extent; but the peculiarity of *Cymbeline* is that the instances it presents of *nature in course* are but *one class* or portion of the numerous mental phenomena the play contains, there being in it also a large number of extraordinary examples of occult sympathies and other similar matters, forming a class that corresponds with the second division made by Bacon of Natural History and styled by him *præter-generations* or *nature erring or varying*.

Under this second head are comprised such marvels as “the *strange events of time and chance, the effect of hidden properties, instances of exceptions to general kinds;*” also *monadica* or things of which there is but one; also “*dreams and divinations,*” and by Aphorism III. of The Preparative, etc., we find that this class embraces such marvels as were referred by writers on Natural magic to sympathy and antipathy. In the *Novum Organum* (Book II. Aph. 31) Bacon mentions also superstition, *charms* and magic as worthy of investigation, together with such instances as the *sympathy of distant objects*, the transmission of impressions, and the like.

This region of the marvelous is precisely that in which *Cymbeline* is cast; the poet assuming as true, for the purposes of his legendary drama, the popular beliefs and superstitions which the philosopher would probably reject as fabulous.

The nature, however, of the marvels that Bacon would admit into his history can be best known from his *Sylva Sylvarum*,



a Natural History in ten centuries.<sup>1</sup> This work was found among Bacon's papers after his death and published in the year 1627, by Dr. Rawley, his chaplain. Shakespeare, of course, could never have seen it. It contains many instances of sympathy and antipathy, with which are identical some of those the dramatist has introduced into *Cymbeline*, whilst others that he has made use of are so similar as clearly to belong to the same class.

Thus in Century X. Experiment 986, Bacon says: "I would have it enquired whether there be any secret passage of sympathy between persons of near blood, as parent, child, brother, sister, husband, and wife, etc."

In the piece, a marked use is made of this sort of sympathy, in the love that springs up at first meeting between Imogen, disguised as a page, and her two brothers, although their relationship is wholly unknown to them.

"*Guiderius.* Were you a woman, youth,  
I should woo hard but be your groom. In honesty  
I bid for you as I do buy.  
*Arviragus.* I'll make 't my comfort  
He is a man : I'll love him as my brother."

Act III. Sc. 6.

Another similar instance is the sudden favor and affection with which Cymbeline regards his daughter, who is unrecognized by him under the disguise she then wears ; although this might, perhaps, be cited as an instance of those cases mentioned in Ex. 939 of Century X. which is as follows : —

"It is mentioned in some stories that where children have been exposed or taken away young from their parents and that afterward they have appeared to their parents' presence, the parents, though they have not known them, have felt a secret joy or other alteration thereupon."

So Cymbeline says to Imogen disguised as Fidele : —

"I have surely seen him.  
His favor is familiar to me.  
Boy, thou hast *look'd thyself into my grace*  
And art mine own.

What would'st thou, boy ?  
I love thee more and more."

Act V. Sc. 5.

<sup>1</sup> This word is used in the same sense in the play : "And on it said a *century* of prayers."

In a passage (Cent. X. Ex. 987) treating of sympathy between distant objects, Bacon suggests as follows:—

“Some trial would be made whether *pact* or *agreement* do anything; as if two friends should agree that *such a day* or *every week* they being in far distant places should *pray one for another*, or should *put on a ring or tablet* one for another, whether, if one of them should break their vow and promise, the other should have any feeling of it in absence.”

Such a pact or agreement “to pray for one another,” is alluded to by Imogen when grieving over the departure of Posthumus.

“Ere I could tell him  
How I would think on him *at certain hours*  
*Such thoughts and such . . .*

*or have charg'd him*

On the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,  
To encounter me with orisons, for then  
*I am in heaven for him.”*

Act I. Sc. 4.

With regard to the exchange of love-tokens, Bacon says further:—

“It is received that it helpeth to *continue love* if one wear a ring or a bracelet of the hair of the party beloved” Century X. Ex. 996.

Imogen and Posthumus exchange a ring and a bracelet as love-tokens and pledges of fidelity.

*Imo.* This diamond was my mother's : take it, heart,  
But keep it till you woo another wife  
When *Imogen* is dead. . .  
*Post.* For my sake, wear this :  
It is a manacle of love ; I'll place it  
Upon this fairest prisoner."

Act I. Sc. 2.

The secret properties of blood are exemplified in the aspirations of the sons of the king, of whom, brought up as mountaineers, it is said that

“Though train’d up thus meanly  
I’ the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit  
The roofs of palaces and nature prompts them  
In simple and low things, to prince it much  
Beyond the trick of others.

Act III. Sc. 3.

Astrological predictions of the fortunes of men are mentioned.

"O learn'd indeed were that astronomer  
That *knew the stars as I his characters* :  
He 'd *lay the future open*."

Act III. Sc. 2.

So, also, the influence of the stars over the bloods or dispositions of men.

"Our *bloods*  
No more *obey the heavens*, than our courtiers  
Still seem as does the king."

Act I. Sc. 1.

A beautiful popular superstition is introduced into the lament of Arviragus over the dead Fidele, which closes with an allusion to the sympathy of the red-breast that covers with leaves the bodies of unburied men.

"The *ruddock* would  
With *charitable bill* . . . bring thee all this,  
Yea, and *furr'd moss* besides, where *flowers are none*,  
To *winter-ground thy corse*."

Act IV. Sc. 2.

Of a like character is the mention made by Guiderius of the "female fairies" that haunt and protect the graves of those that die innocent.

"With *female fairies* will his *tomb be haunted*  
And worms will not come to thee."

Act IV. Sc. 2.

Under this head may be placed also the superstitious belief that the souls of men slain in battle are appeased by the slaughter of captive enemies.

"The *tribute*  
The Britons have *raz'd out*, though with the loss  
Of many a bold one ; whose kinsmen have made suit  
That their *good souls may be appeas'd with slaughter*  
Of you *their captives*."

Act V. Sc. 5.

Similar to this is the belief in charms used for protection.

"I, in *my own woe charm'd*,  
*Could not find death* where I did hear him groan."

Act V. Sc. 3.

The superstitious tendency to attribute what is unknown or un-



accountable to supernatural causes is marked in the observation of the soldiers.

"Great Jupiter be prais'd ! Lucius is taken :  
'T is thought the old man and his sons were angels."

Act V. Sc. 3.

In Century X. Ex. 945, Bacon says: "Fear and shame are likewise infections, for we see that the starting of one will make another start."

And in Ex. 1000, the effect of sympathy upon multitudes of men is noticed.

Of these there is an admirable illustration in *panic fear*—succeeded by an *infectious courage*—so elaborately described in the narration of the battle, Act V. Sc. 3.

"The king himself  
Of his wings destitute, the army broken,  
And but the backs of Britons seen, all flying  
Through a straight lane ; the enemy full-hearted,  
Lolling the tongue with slaughtering, having work  
More plentiful than tools to do 't, struck down  
Some mortally, some slightly touch'd, some falling  
Merely through fear, etc."

"These three  
. . . with this word, 'stand, stand,'  
Accommodated by the place, more charming  
With their own nobleness (which could have turn'd  
A distaff to a lance) gilded pale looks,  
Part shame, part spirit renew'd ; that some turn'd coward  
But by example (O a sin in war,  
Damn'd in the first beginners), 'gan to look  
The way that they did and to grin like lions  
On the pikes o' the hunters, etc."

"And now our cowards  
(Like fragments in hard voyages) became  
The life o' the need. . . .

Heavens, how they wound !  
Ten, chas'd by one,  
Are now each one the slaughter-man of twenty ;  
Those that would die or ere resist are grown  
The mortal bugs<sup>1</sup> o' the field."

Act V. Sc. 3.

There are in the play also allusions to the glances of the basilisk and of the evil eye (Ex. 944), both of which are mentioned, and the last apparently believed, by Bacon.

<sup>1</sup> Bugs, terrors.

A beautiful instance of poetic sympathy or that power by which the poet causes all nature to sympathize with his passion, occurs in Iachimo's description of the sleeping Imogen. The passage illustrates *admiration* as a form of sympathy, but with true Shakespearian subtilty Iachimo is made to express his admiration by describing the taper as sympathizing in the feeling.

"The flame of the taper  
Bows toward her and would underpeep her lids  
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied  
Under these windows, white and azure, lac'd  
With blue of heaven's own tint."

Act II. Sc. 2.

Of *antipathies*, there are some striking instances. The Queen has an antipathy both to the king and to Imogen; the one she "*abhors*," the other is "*as a scorpion in her sight*."

In *Sylva Sylvarum*, Cent. X. Ex. 984, Bacon observes, "Generally that which is dead or corrupted hath an antipathy with the same thing when it is alive and when it is sound, as a *carcass of a man* is most infectious and *odious to man*."

This is introduced into the play, where Imogen is pillowed upon the dead body of Cloten.

"How! a page!  
Or dead or sleeping on him? but *dead* rather;  
For nature doth abhor to make his couch  
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead."

Act IV. Sc. 2.

Another instance of antipathy is mentioned by Bacon (Cent V. Ex. 480), when treating of the ancient and received tradition touching the sympathy and antipathy of plants, he says, "Some will thrive best growing near to others, which they impute to sympathy, and some worse, which they impute to antipathy," the explanation of which he gives as follows:—

"Whenever a plant draweth such a particular juice out of the earth as it qualifieth the earth so as that juice which remaineth is fit for the other plant, then the neighborhood doeth good," etc. Then alluding to the old tradition (probably taken by him from Porta's "*Natural Magic*," or, it may be, from Varro) of the enmity between the colewort and the vine, he says:—

"So the colewort is not an enemy (though that was anciently received) to the vine only, but it is an enemy to any other plant, because it draweth the fattest juice of the earth."

And he proposes the following experiment: "Take a service-tree or an *elder-tree*, which we know have fruits of a harsh and binding juice and set them near a vine and see whether the grapes will not be the sweeter."

Now in the play a highly figurative passage is framed on this antipathy of one plant to another, though in keeping with the fabulous character of his dramatic legend, the poet assumes such antipathy as a fact, yet singularly enough adopts for his illustration not the unpoetical colewort as given by Porta or Varro, from whom he might possibly have taken this instance, but the *elder*, which is selected by Bacon for his experiment.

"*Guid.* I do note  
That Grief and Patience rooted in him both  
Do mingle their spurs together.  
*Arvir.* Grow, Patience,  
And let the stinking *elder*, *Grief*, untwine  
His *perishing root*, with the *increasing vine*."

Act IV. Sc. 2.

*Perishing* is obviously taken here in an active sense and signifies "causing to perish," not an infrequent use of the word.

Under *Præter-generation* Bacon also classes *dreams* and *divinations*. In the play there is a case directly in point in the dream of the soothsayer portending success to the Roman host; and observe that Bacon in the *De Augmentis* (Book III. ch. 4) lays down the doctrine that the state of the mind productive of divination is "procured or promoted by *abstinence* and such things as withdraw the mind from exercising the functions of the body," that is "by *fasting* and *prayer*."

"*Lucius.* Now, sir,  
What have you *dream'd* of late, of *this war's purpose*?  
*Sooth.* Last night the *very gods show'd me a vision*  
(*I fast and pray'd* for their intelligence) thus —  
I saw Jove's bird, the Roman eagle, wing'd  
From the spongy South to this part of the West,  
Then vanish'd in the sunbeams; which portends  
(Unless my sins abuse *my divination*)  
*Success* to the Roman host."

Act IV. Sc. 2.

A like instance is the vision of Posthumus. This is supposed by some critics to be an interpolation, but it is woven into the plot and catastrophe and is perfectly in keeping with the whole spirit and philosophy of the play.



Among other things which Bacon would have placed in his Natural History as instances of *præter-generations* of nature, are what he calls *monadica* or things singular in their kind, as the sun and moon among stars; the magnet among stones; quicksilver among metals, etc. (Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 28.)

These also appear in the play applied to human nature, as in the description of Posthumus.

"He is a creature such  
As, to seek through *the regions of the earth*  
For *one his like*, there *would be something failing*  
In him that *should compare*. I do not think  
So *fair an outward and such stuff within*  
Endows a man but *he*."

Act I. Sc. 1.

Imogen also belongs to this class of "singular instances."

"All of her, that is out of door, most rich!  
If she be *furnish'd with a mind so rare*  
She is *alone the Arabian bird*; and I  
Have lost the *wager*."

Act I. Sc. 7.

The foregoing instances of strange and unusual sympathies and antipathies, together with those of charms, dreams, divinations, and the like, leave no doubt that the peculiar class of phenomena called by Bacon "*præter-generation*" in his "plan and rule" for a Natural History is amply introduced into the piece, and that many of them, moreover, are operative as motives that decide the action of the characters.

And indeed the play itself, on account of the marvels of its plot and its notable digressions from ordinary dramatic rule, may be considered a dramatic *præter-generation*; and this notion of *præter-generation*, or of something which deviates, goes *aside* or *beyond* the ordinary course of things, constantly recurs in the rhetoric. This is one of the subtilities this writer uses to work impressions on our minds and produce unity of effect; but inasmuch as in the Shakespearian drama the phraseology is controlled by the leading conceptions which enter into the theory of the piece<sup>1</sup> and is therefore to a certain extent a proof that such conceptions exist in it, the diction of *Cymbeline* will show, provided the notion of *præter-generation* is prevalent in the piece, that that conception enters into its scheme, and that the piece, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> This is particularly set forth in the article on *The Winter's Tale*.

presents in that respect an analogy with Bacon's science ; that, in short, the classification and nomenclature of the poet and the philosopher are identical ; although at the time *Cymbeline* was written Bacon had not given such nomenclature to the world. The curious reader, therefore, may find some interest in marking the phrases which contain the notion of the Latin *præter*, as *beside*, *aside*, *by the side of*, *near by*, *beyond*, *over*, *together with*, in *addition* to, *what remains*, that is, *what is over* or *in surplus*, etc. These are copiously scattered through the play, and also an unusual number of "aside" speeches, — proofs of the unwearied attention of the writer to the most trivial *minutiæ*.

Bacon's third division of Natural History is that of *Nature wrought* or the *History of Arts*, which he calls also Mechanical and Experimental History.

In this respect, also, the play conforms to Bacon's "plan and rule" for a Natural History, since it contains abundant allusions to the mechanical and to the practical part of the liberal arts. Take, for instance, Iachimo's description of the tapestry of Imogen's chamber.

"It was hang'd  
With *tapestry of silk and silver* : the story  
Proud Cleopatra, when she met the Roman,  
And Cydnus swell'd above the banks, or for  
The press of boats or pride. *A piece of work*  
*So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive*  
*In workmanship and value* : which I wonder'd  
*Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,*" etc.

Act II. Sc. 4.

This description of a piece of workmanship includes also a comparison of values.

Another instance is taken from sculpture.

"The chimney  
Is south the chamber, and the *chimney-piece*  
Chaste Dian bathing : never saw I figures  
*So likely to report themselves : the cutter*  
*Was as another nature, dumb, outwent her,*  
*Motion and breath left out."*

Act II. Sc. 4.

This, also, is a description of a work of art, which involves a comparison of merit.

The next instance is one of mechanical work in silver and gold.

“*The roof* of the chamber  
 With golden cherubims is fretted : her andirons  
 (I had forgot them) were two winking Cupids  
 Of silver, each on one foot standing, nicely  
 Depending on their brands.”

Act II. Sc. 4.

Here a work is described in a manner that recalls a passage in Bacon's *Physiological Remains*, where he speaks of the compounding of metals to be used in “the arts and as materials for those things wherein the beauty and lustre are esteemed, as *andirons* and all manner of images, statues, columns, and the like.”

The poet, however, makes his andirons of silver.

Another instance of handicraft is “the most *curious* mantle, wrought by the hand of the queen-mother.”

The chemical experiments of the Queen with drugs and poisons are directly in point.

The introduction of Jupiter, the *Deus ex machina*, to bring about the catastrophe is an instance of poetical machinery ; but the most pointed allusion to the mechanical arts is perhaps that to the instrument or organ, which is moved by mechanism and fills the cave of Belarius with solemn music.

“*My ingenious instrument !*  
 Hark, it sounds ! but what occasion  
 Hath Cadwal now to *give it motion*.”

Act IV. Sc. 2.

The inventor of this instrument, if he had been acquainted with Bacon's writings, might have taken a hint from the history entitled *Phænomena Universi*, in which there is the following account : —

“There were lately with us certain Batavians, who had constructed an instrument, which, when exposed to the sun, uttered harmonious sounds. It is probable that this effect was caused by the expansion of heated air, which,” (as the original Latin runs) “*principium motus dare potuit*.” This last phrase the play literally translates “to *give it motion*.”

The frequent mention in the play of arts and crafts is observable ; and it sometimes leads to false rhetoric, as in the following :

“Thither write, my queen,  
 And with mine eyes *I'll drink* the words you send,  
 Though ink be made of gall.”

Act I. Sc. 2.



In the Seventh Aphorism of the "Description of such a natural and experimental history as shall suffice to form a basis for philosophy," Bacon "recommends that all *bodies* and *qualities* be, as far as possible, *reduced to number, weight, measure, and precise definition.*"

To this precept, also, the play, applying to man's moral nature what Bacon applies to physical bodies and qualities, most ingeniously conforms; the mental and moral qualities of the characters being metaphorically reduced to weight, measure, and number, or defined under the relations of space and time. The following are instances: —

"Posthumus,  
From whose so many weights of baseness cannot  
A drachm of worth be drawn."

Act III. Sc. 5.

I love thee; I have spoke it;  
"How much the quantity, the weight as much,  
As I do love my father."

Act IV. Sc. 2.

In the following character is measured by *extension*.

"You speak him far.  
I do extend him, sir, within himself, crush him together  
Rather than unfold his measure duly."

Act I. Sc. 1.

Size is given to guilt.

"You do remember this stain upon her?  
*Post.* Ay, and it doth confirm another stain  
As big as Hell can hold.  
*Iach.* Will you hear more?  
*Post.* Spare your arithmetic.

Act II. Sc. 4.

The boundless nature of Cæsar's ambition is thus described: —

"Cæsar's ambition  
Which swell'd so much that it did almost stretch  
The sides of the world."

Act III. Sc. 1.

On the other hand, pity is fancifully measured by comparing it with a very minute object.

"If there be  
Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity  
As a wren's eye, fear'd gods! a part of it."

Act IV. Sc. 2.

The lessening magnitude of an object as it recedes in the distance is made to measure, by inverse proportion, the intensity of love.

“ *Imogen.* Thou should’st have made him  
As little as a crow or less, ere left  
To after eye him.

*Pisanio.* Madam, so I did.

*Imo.* I would have broke my eye-strings, crack’d ’em, but  
To look upon him : till the *diminution*  
*Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle,*  
Nay, follow’d him, till he had melted from  
*The smallness of a gnat to air* and then  
Have turn’d my eye and wept.”

Act I. Sc 4.

Imogen’s love and impatience to meet her husband are measured by the time and space that must be overcome to meet him.

“ O for a horse with wings ! Hear’st thou, Pisanio ?  
He is at Milford Haven : Read, and tell me  
How far ’t is thither. If one of mean affairs  
*May plod it in a week,* why may not I  
*Glide thither in a day ? . . .*

Pr’y thee, speak,  
*How many score of miles* may we well ride  
*’Twixt sun and sun ?*

*Pis.* One score, *’twixt sun and sun,*  
Madam, *is enough for you,* and too much, too.

*Imo.* Why, one that rode to his execution, man,  
*Could never go so slow.”*

Act III. Sc. 2.

So, also, bulk is attributed to thought and moral worth.

“ My mistress exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your unworthy thinking.”

Act I. Sc. 5.

The same method is used to produce the comic.

“ *Cloten.* The villain would not stand me.

1 *Lord.* Stand you ! You have land enough of your own, but he added to your having ; gave you some ground.

2 *Lord.* As many inches as you have oceans : Puppies !

*Cloten.* I would they had not come between us.

2 *Lord.* So would I, till you had measured how long a fool you were upon the ground.”

Act I. Sc. 2.

In addition to the measurement of thought and feeling by space, time, weight, and quantity, great use is made of *price*, or the measure of value. This accords with the subject of the play,

which is the *comparative worth* of men. In all the leading scenes, the notion of comparative value in some form is introduced, and on every page can be found diction and metaphor drawn from the market place, bookkeeping, and the exchanges of value. Instances may be found in the quotations already made for other purposes ; but one or two more may be added.

The old saying that "death pays all debts" is thus put by the gaoler.

"O the *charity* of a *penny cord* ! it sums up thousands in a trice ; you have no true debtor or creditor but it ; of what 's past, is, and to come, the discharge.

"Your neck, sir, is *pen, book and counters* ; so the *acquittance* follows."

Act V. Sc. 4.

Or take, as another instance, Posthumus' expression of contrition in his prayer to the gods.

"To satisfy,

If of my freedom 't is the main part, take

No stricter render of me, *than my all*.

I know you are more clement than vile men,

Who of their broken debtors take a third,

A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again

On their abatement : that 's not my desire :

For Imogen's dear life, take mine, and though

'T is not so dear, yet 't is a life : you coin'd it :

'Tween man and man, they weigh not every stamp ;

Though light, take pieces for the figure's sake :

You rather mine, being yours : and so, great powers,

If you will take this audit, take this life

And cancel these cold bonds."

Act V. Sc. 4.

Moral values, at times, exceed all measure, as in Posthumus' valuation of his ring. Iachimo says to him, in allusion to Imogen :—

"If she went before others I have seen, as that *diamond* of yours *out-lustres* many I have beheld, I could not but believe she excelled many, but I have not seen the most precious diamond that is, nor you the lady.

*Post.* I praised her as I rated her : so do I my stone.

*Iach.* What do you esteem it at ?

*Post.* More than the world enjoys."

Act I. Sc. 5.

The estimate that Posthumus puts upon his ring has a counterpart in the value Imogen places upon the bracelet which her husband had given her.



"Go, bid my woman

Search for a jewel, that too casually  
Hath left my arm : it was thy master's ; shrew me  
If I would lose it *for a revenue*  
*Of any king's in Europe.*"

Act II. Sc. 3.

Both ring and bracelet have a moral value, for which there is no adequate material standard.

The foregoing examples of bodies and qualities weighed, measured, and valued, although metaphorical, are yet so numerous that they suffice to show that the play conforms so far as is practicable to the requirements of the 7th aphorism of Bacon's Description of a Natural History.

In another aphorism, the third, Bacon directs that in making their narrations "men dismiss *antiquity* and quotations . . . and as for the *ornaments* of speech, *similitudes*, *treasury of eloquence* and such like emptinesses, let them be utterly dismissed, nay, let all those things which are admitted be set down *briefly* and *concisely*, so that they may be nothing less than words."

This precept is well observed by Guiderius, in his account of Cloten's fate ; it is a particularly *brief* and *concise* statement of an important fact, a statement which is "nothing less than words."

"Let me end the story ;

*I slew him there.*

*Cym.* Marry, the gods forefend !

I would not thy good deeds should from my lips

Pluck a harsh sentence ; pr'ythee, valiant youth,

Deny 't again.

*Guid.*

*I have spoke it and I did it."*

Act V. Sc. 5.

On the other hand the precept is violated to a remarkable degree by Iachimo's narrative of the wager and of his fraudulent mode of winning it. No doubt, Iachimo's reluctance to confess his villainy causes him to wind about with circumstance ; and his Italian cunning leads him to obscure the facts as much as possible in a cloud of words, so that his delay in coming to the point is in character ; still the narrative, with its "similitudes" and superfluous rhetoric, is on these accounts all the more a pointed illustration of the neglect of Bacon's rule requiring all statements to be *brief*, *concise* and *nothing less than words*.

“Upon a time (unhappy was the clock  
That struck the hour !) it was in Rome (accurs’d  
The mansion where !) ’t was at a feast (O would  
Our viands had been poison’d or at least  
Those which I heav’d to head !) the good Posthumus  
(What should I say ? he was too good to be  
Where ill men were ; and was the best of all  
Amongst the rarest of good ones) sitting sadly,  
Hearing us praise our loves of Italy  
For beauty that made barren the swell’d boast  
Of him that best could speak ; for feature *laming*  
The shrine of Venus or straight-pight Minerva,  
Postures beyond brief nature ; for condition  
A shop of all the qualities, that man  
Loves woman for ; beside that hook of wiving  
Fairness that strikes the eye.”

Cymbeline, eager to learn the fate of his child, breaks in on this excessive flow of ornamental rhetoric, with

“ *I stand on fire,  
Come to the matter.*”

Iachimo resumes the narrative, but still fills it with irrelevant statements.

“This Posthumus  
(Most like a noble lord in love and one  
That had a royal lover) took this hint ;  
And not dispraising whom we prais’d (therein  
He was as calm as virtue) he began  
His mistress’ picture, which by his tongue being made  
And then a mind put in ’t, either our brags  
Were crack’d of kitchen trulls, or his description  
Prov’d us unspeaking sots.”

Act V. Sc. 5.

And again, Cymbeline, losing patience with this prolixity and “emptiness,” exclaims —

“Nay, nay, *to the purpose.*”

The remainder of the narrative, though disclosing the facts, is still characterized by needless “similitudes,” comparisons, and allusions to “antiquity,” and the whole passage is an admirable illustration of a statement of the highest importance rendered prolix by profuse and unnecessary ornament and imagery.

It may be contrasted with Belarius’ terse accounts of the abduction of the princes.

The foregoing citations make it quite apparent that the play corresponds so far as is consistent with dramatic form in numerous passages with the subjects and mode of treatment laid down by Bacon as the matter and the plan of a Natural History for purposes of induction.

After the collection, however, of a sufficient store of materials for induction, the next step in Bacon's system is "to digest and arrange this mass of facts into tables and regular order, that the mind may be able to act upon it and perform its office."

"All the particulars that pertain to the subject of inquiry shall, by means of Tables of Discovery, apt, well-arranged and as it were animate, be drawn up and marshaled and the mind be set to work upon the helps duly prepared and digested which such Tables supply." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 102.

The last scene of this play, if *not intended* as a dramatic parallel to such a table, will at any rate *answer* for one, for in it are brought together and tabulated, as it were, all the events that are dispersed in an irregular and disconnected manner through the previous four acts. At the opening of this scene, all the characters, each of whom has accurate knowledge derived from personal experience on some one point, are involved generally in a maze of error, ignorance, and perplexity. Posthumus supposes Imogen to be dead; Imogen is confident that Posthumus has been murdered by Cloten and that she has seen his dead body buried by Lucius and his soldiers; she is convinced also that the drug given her by Pisanio as a medicine was a poison intended to take her life; her flight from the Court is a mystery to all but Pisanio, who, nevertheless, is at a loss to conjecture what has become of her and "remains perplexed, in all;" Cloten's death is known only to Guiderius and his companions; the knowledge that the children of the king (who have not been heard of in twenty years) are alive is confined to Belarius, who also is the only person that can explain the mode of their abduction and the motives for it; the existence of Belarius in his true character is unknown to all and even his reputed sons think him "old Morgan;" Imogen is disguised as Fidele and is supposed by the two princes to be dead, and they, in ignorance of her being their sister, perform her obsequies; Iachimo alone is acquainted with the treachery practiced upon Imogen, and also upon Posthumus; the poor soldier who aids in winning the battle disappears and



cannot be found, "though searched among the dead and living;" the plots of the Queen are hidden from all until her dying hour, and none but Cornelius, the physician, can account for Fidele's apparent revival from death. No one of the characters has a general or connected knowledge of these events, but each has a personal experience which can throw light upon a few particulars, about which the others are grossly in error. It is only by bringing them together, so that by their respective discoveries these disconnected and dispersed events can be arranged in due order and formed, as it were, into a Table of Discovery (so far as is consistent with dramatic dialogue), that their causes, connections and relations can be clearly shown and the whole truth made manifest. But before setting out this synopsis or table of facts, let us examine what Bacon meant by *induction*.

Induction appertains to the Art of Judging. Treating of the Judgment, Bacon says, "The art of Judging handleth *the nature of proofs and demonstrations*. This art, as it is commonly received, concludes either by induction or syllogism." [De Aug. Book V. ch. 4.

Syllogism and induction are converse processes of the mind. By the syllogism is proved that what is true of a whole class is true of each member of the class; by induction is proved that which is true of all the parts is true of the whole. This last is unquestionably a valid argument provided the enumeration of the parts is complete, but one contradictory instance overthrows the conclusion; consequently Bacon rejected this ordinary form of induction no less than the syllogism as a means of investigating nature, and says:—

"Therefore for *the real and exact form of the judgment* we refer ourselves to what we have spoken of *Interpretation of nature*."

What was this "Interpretation of Nature"? Bacon had given no explanation of what he meant by it at the time *Cymbeline* was written, nor from anything then published could Shakespeare know what Bacon's system was, and consequently could not know, unless from personal intercourse with Bacon, that it was an essential feature of that system to found the interpretation of nature on history or experience or that such history was to be digested into tables; for in the *Advancement*, which was all that Bacon had published at this time, he says nothing on these

points, but only makes a promise to explain his system in some future work.

This promise Bacon, though writing treatises on this subject in the same year that *Cymbeline* was produced, did not keep until the year 1620, when the *Novum Organum* was published. In that work he says : —

“ Another form of induction must be devised than has hitherto been employed . . . The induction which proceeds by simple enumeration is childish ; its conclusions are precarious and exposed to peril from one contradictory instance, and it generally decides on too small a number of facts and those only which are at hand. But the induction which is to be available for the discovery and demonstration of sciences and arts . . . should analyze nature by *proper rejections and exclusions* and then after a sufficient number of negatives, come to a conclusion on the affirmative instances ” (Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 105), that is, by collecting and comparing many instances and proofs, which so far as they are inconsistent, mutually negative, exclude or limit each other, we are enabled to conclude the truth from the affirmative that remains.

Of this method, the play furnishes an apt example by *bringing in* and comparing the various experiences of the characters, by which a synopsis or table of facts is presented and the mistakes and errors into which they all in some respects had fallen are corrected and excluded.

By the result of the battle, the personages of the drama, either as victors or vanquished, are unexpectedly brought together. Of these, some are disguised and unknown, and even those between whom there are the closest ties of relationship are ignorant of each other's existence. Each of these personages represents a certain amount of experience, a portion of which is true knowledge and a portion erroneous inference through some mistake of the judgment or of the sense. The object is to form a table of facts, which, by comparing particulars, shall exclude or correct these errors, clear up what is perplexed and mysterious, and by revealing the causes of the events in the motives that prompted them enable the mind to judge of the true natures and characters of the actors.

And, first, Cornelius the physician announces to the king the death of the Queen. He repeats her dying words in which she



confesses the mortal hatred which she had harbored for the king and for Imogen and the designs that she meditated against their lives. By this discovery, Cymbeline's mind is disabused of its gross infatuation. He says : —

“She alone knew this,  
And, but she spoke it dying, I would not  
Believe her lips, in opening it.”

And he owns that the Queen's influence over him had been the cause of his perverted feeling and judgment towards Imogen.

The Roman captives having been introduced, Cymbeline proceeds to sentence them to death, when Lucius pleads for the life of his page Fidele (the disguised Imogen) who, at once, through sympathy of blood, is taken into favor by the king and is promised any boon fitting the king's bounty to bestow.

Imogen thereupon demands that Iachimo may render of whom he had the ring he was then wearing, it being the ring he had won from Posthumus. This forces Iachimo to confess his villainous “design in visiting Britain” and the treachery he had practiced upon both Imogen and Posthumus ; a discovery by which Posthumus, who is standing by unknown, is made aware of his grievous error in relying upon false oaths and mere signs of his wife's guilt, and of his still more terrible mistake in ordering her to be put to death.

He thereupon discovers himself, confesses the murder of his wife, and calls for punishment upon his head. Imogen, who until then had believed him dead, moved by his distress, speaks to him with intent to undeceive him ; and this, together with the intervention of Pisanio, who recognizes his mistress, leads him to perceive that Fidele is no other than Imogen, so that both husband and wife, at almost the same moment, are made conscious of the great error into which each had fallen with regard to the other's death ; the one through false testimony, the other through an erroneous inference and a deception of the sense.

Imogen, upon seeing Pisanio, and remembering the effect of the drug upon her, accuses him of giving her poison ; but this mistake is corrected by Cornelius, who gives an account of the Queen's experiments, and acknowledges that, “dreading that her purpose was of danger,” he had furnished her with a powerful opiate instead of the poison she had asked for, and that it was of this that Imogen had taken.



By this statement, Belarius and his reputed sons are apprised of the error into which they had fallen when they mistook Fidele's trance for a real death, and their wonder and perplexity at seeing the seeming page alive after having performed his obsequies are consequently removed.

Belarius, moreover, learning that Fidele is Imogen, the sister of the two princes, sees in the sympathy of blood "the motive" or cause of the sudden affection (which had seemed to him almost miraculous) that had sprung up between the princes and the wandering boy.

In the mean time, Cymbeline, overjoyed at finding Imogen, assures her that their previous estrangement had been owing to the Queen, who had since died, and that Cloten had most unaccountably disappeared; at which Pisanio discloses that Cloten had enforced from him a suit of the garments of Posthumus and that, clad in these, he had posted with "*unchaste purpose*" to Wales, but adds that he knows nothing of what had become of him.

Guiderius, however, supplements Pisanio's story by avowing that he had had an encounter with Cloten and had taken his head from him, — a discovery which enables Imogen to perceive the mistake into which her judgment had been led by inferring that the headless body of Cloten was that of Posthumus.

The frank avowal of Guiderius that he had slain the prince drawing down a sentence of death upon him, Belarius, who had passed as "old Morgan," throws off his disguise, owns himself a banished man, confesses the abduction of the princes and "his *end* in stealing them," and concludes by presenting to the king as his own blood and issue the two youths, who are identified by unmistakable birthmarks and tokens.

And finally, after all these errors are corrected and these mysteries cleared up, Posthumus, in answer to Cymbeline's expressions of regret that the forlorn soldier who had so nobly fought cannot be found, acknowledges himself to have been that soldier, disguised in poor beseeeming, it being "a fitment for the *purpose* he then followed."

And thus by *inducting* or *bringing* in the various personages and by arranging in due order and comparing their different proofs or experiences, a table of facts is formed, whereby the gross errors and false conclusions into which they each had fallen are

reciprocally corrected and eliminated, the secret motives and purposes, and consequently the real nature of each particular character, is specially and distinctly revealed, and the true causes of all that is hidden or inexplicable in the events laid bare.

This rapid compend, or "fierce abridgment" as Cymbeline calls it, is, perhaps, as close an imitation of a "table of discovery," or what Bacon sometimes calls "a coördination of instances," as could be expected in an acting drama, where the formation of the table and the process of induction are represented in dramatic action and by living actors; but the real point of the imitation is that the scene represents the mode by which the errors and false conclusions, which have arisen either by the deception of the senses or by false inference or by too great a reliance upon mere signs and secondary evidence, are corrected by *experience*. This is the essential point of the Baconian induction and in this respect the scene is perfect.

Nor has the dramatist omitted an instance of false induction or conclusion from simple enumeration without instance contradictory, a method which Bacon repeatedly denounces as *puerile, gross, childish*, etc.

In his *De Augmentis*, he thus speaks of this ordinary logical induction:—

"To conclude upon a bare enumeration of particulars as the logicians do, without contradictory instance, is a vicious conclusion. Nor does this kind of induction produce more than a probable conjecture. For who can assure himself when the particulars which he knows or remembers appear only on one side, that there are not others on the contrary side which appear not? as if Samuel should have rested upon those sons of Jesse who were brought before him in the house and not have sought David, who was in the field." *De Aug. Book V. ch. 2.*

This is illustrated by the false induction made by Imogen with respect to the headless body of Cloten, which, from the garments and other points of resemblance, she concludes to be that of Posthumus. It should be observed that the dramatic situation is of that wild and improbable kind that is known only to the legendary drama, and its pathos depends upon the reader's yielding implicitly to the poetic imagination. On this account, when the lines are cited as an example to illustrate a philosophical principle (which, of course, translates them into prose), they become

almost ludicrous. This, perhaps, makes them more striking as an illustration of the "*puerility*" of the logician's method of induction.

"*Imo. A headless man ! the garments of Posthumus !*

*I know the shape of his leg : this is his hand :*

*His foot Mercurial : his Martial thigh :*

*The browns of Hercules : but his Jovial face, —*

*Murder in heaven ? How ? 'T is gone.*

*. . . O Posthumus ! alas*

*Where 's thy head ? where 's that ? ah me ! where 's that ?"*

Act IV. Sc. 2.

This is clearly a false induction by simple enumeration into which Imogen is led by concluding from too small a number of facts, without taking into account the instance contradictory, the head, which, had it been present, would have entirely disproved the conclusion.

The whole end and aim of Bacon's system is to supply the senses, memory, and reason with such ministrations and helps as shall make them equal to the interpretation of nature. Hence the title of Bacon's work, *Novum Organum* or the *new instrument*. This falls in with the theory of the play, which assumes ministrations and services as the law of human intercourse. The rhetoric of the piece, therefore, is pervaded with this dominant conception and the notions of help, aid, service, agency, instrumentality, are everywhere met with. To this thought may be traced some of the boldest metaphors; as for instance, Imogen calls her fingers "*pickaxes*," Iachimo speaks of the eyes as "*spectacles*," and Posthumus calls repentance "*the penitent instrument*" to "*pick the bolt*" of the conscience. In the following measurement of speed taken from an hour-glass the notion of agency is introduced in a very quaint and ingenious way.

"I have heard of riding wagers

Where horses have been nimbler *than the sands*

That run in the clock's behalf."

The analogies which have been in the previous pages pointed out between the play and Bacon's doctrines appertain to the *Art of Judging* — which in fact is the head and front of Bacon's system, and for which he invented his apparatus of histories, tables, charts, etc.; but there appear to be considered also in the play minor points, such as the *Arts of Custody* and of *Trans-*



*mission*, which come in for exemplification, as, for instance, one of the helps of the memory is writing and this comes under the head of the third of the logical arts set down by Bacon as the Art of Custody or Memory.

"The art of memory," says Bacon, "is divided into two parts: viz., the doctrine of helps for the memory and the doctrine of the memory itself. The great help to the memory is *writing*. And this is particularly the case in inductive philosophy and in the interpretation of nature; for one might as well attempt to go through the calculations of an Ephemeris in his head without the aid of writing as to master the interpretation of nature by the natural and naked force of thought and memory without the *help of tables duly arranged*." De Aug. Book V. ch. 5.

Of writing as a help to the memory, an example is given in Iachimo's taking notes of Imogen's chamber.

"But my design

To note the chamber: *I will write all down:*

*Such and such pictures: There the window; such*

*The adornment of her bed: The arras, figures,*

*Why, such and such. And the contents of the story.*

*Ah, but some natural notes about her body*

*Above ten thousand meaner movables*

*Would testify, to enrich mine inventory.*

*. . . No more! To what end?*

*Why should I write this down, that's riveted,*

*Screwed to my memory?"*

Act II. Sc. 2.

Among helps or "ministrations" to the memory Bacon prescribes a list of interrogatories to be appended to the history of any subject propounded touching such points as need to be inquired into. These he calls "Topics or Articles of Enquiry." Works, vol. vii. p. 49. See, also, The Rule of Nat. and Ex. Hist., vol. ix. p. 376.

In his own histories he always made use of such topics; they were part of his method.

There is a passage in the play which may be taken as a parallel of these "topics" or interrogatories, where Cymbeline having heard enough of the facts to furnish a clue to inquiry, exclaims:—

"When shall I hear all through? This *fierce abridgment*  
*Hath to it circumstantial branches, which*

Distinction should be rich in.    *Where, how liv'd you,  
And when came you to serve our Roman captive?  
How parted with your brothers? how first met them?  
Why fled you from the Court? and whither? These,  
And your three motives to the battle, with  
I know not how much more, should be demanded;  
And all the other by-dependencies  
From chance to chance, but nor the time nor place  
Will serve our long inter'gatories."*

Act V. Sc. 5.

The tabulation of facts was also one of the "helps of the memory." Iachimo, in order to emphasize the deliberate nature of his judgment upon Posthumus, refers to a method of tabulating facts for the purpose of interpreting them. "I could have looked upon him without the *help of admiration*, though the *catalogue of his endowments* had been *tabled by his side* and I to *peruse him by items*."

Of the last of the four logical arts, viz., the art of Transmission, Bacon thus speaks:—

"We next proceed to the art of Transmitting or of producing and expressing to others those things which have been invented, judged and laid up in the memory, which I will call by a general name, The Art of Transmission. This art includes all the arts which relate to words and discourse.

"The doctrine concerning the organ of discourse has two parts, the one relating to speech, the other to writing. For Aristotle says rightly that 'words are the images of thoughts and letters of words.' . . . But the Art of Transmission has some other children *besides words and letters*."

"The *notes of things* which carry a signification without the help or intervention of words are of two kinds. . . . Of the first kind are *hieroglyphics* and *gestures*; of the second are real characters. . . . Gestures are *transitory hieroglyphics*, for as uttered words fly away, but written words stand, so *hieroglyphics expressed by gestures* pass, but when expressed in pictures remain. For, when Periander, being consulted with how to preserve a tyranny, bade the messenger follow him and went into the garden and topped all the highest flowers, hinting at the cutting off the nobility, he made use of a hieroglyphic just as much as if he had drawn it on paper." De Aug. Book VI. ch. 1.

Of transitory hieroglyphics, a very beautiful illustration and

one perfectly analogous with Periander's topping the flowers is introduced into the play. It occurs in Pisanio's account of the embarkation and sailing of Posthumus, and observe how the feeling of reluctance at parting is measured inversely by the velocity of the ship.

“ So long

As he could make me with this eye or ear  
Distinguish him from others, he did keep  
The deck *with glove or hat or handkerchief*  
*Still waving, as the fits and stirs of his mind*  
Could best express how slow his soul sail'd on,  
How *swift his ship.*”

Act I. Sc. 4.

The doctrine of “The Notes of Things,” which comprises gestures and bodily expressions, is largely illustrated throughout the play — a play which views the world as a living history, a knowledge of which is gained, so far as man is concerned, by interpreting not merely his words, but also his looks and gestures, as the outward characters or notes in which is written his inward character or nature.

The same doctrine is copiously exemplified by the acting and simulation of Iachimo, and an instance, even on a broader scale, of gesticulation and action used to convey a meaning is “the dumb show” introduced into the last act. Some critics of a high name have conjectured that this scene together with the vision of Posthumus is a relic of an older play, on which Shakespeare founded his drama; but there does not appear to be a particle of evidence that such older play ever existed; besides, this dumb show and the vision are both interwoven with the previous conduct of the plot and with its subsequent catastrophe. But be this as it may, its pantomime is an excellent example, whether intended for one or not, of the doctrine of the “interpretation of the notes of things.”

And, in fact, had there been an older play containing passages that he could utilize, this dramatist in all probability would not have hesitated a moment to adopt them. He seemed to have purposes in view which rendered literary reputation and charges of plagiarism of secondary importance. Whatever came in his way that suited his purpose, he seized upon and made his own. He is to the extant literature of his day

“ As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it  
By sovereignty of nature.”



Besides, it saved time. He therefore levied contributions upon all the authors he could make available, whether ancient or modern. The beautiful passage which he puts into the mouth of Imogen on the departure of Posthumus, he took from Ovid ; but as he uses it, he converts it into an instance of the measurement of an emotion by space and distance ; thus making it conform to "the directions for a Natural History."

The play, moreover, concludes with two instances of interpretation by the soothsayer Philaronus (a lover of fitness or congruity), one of a dream, the other of the enigmatical tablet left with Posthumus ; the poet thus putting apparently a mark upon the play itself to denote in some measure its special significance. And but for these interpretations, the character of the Soothsayer is superfluous, he taking no part in the action.

The side of language exemplified in this play is that of written characters or "images of words," that require interpretation. This accords with the whole tenor of the piece.

The proofs of history are writings or what is in the nature of writing, as monuments, relics, and other signs and characters in which the events of the past are written and through which the life of bygone times is interpreted, and it is noteworthy that the plot of this dramatic history is carried forward by the agency of letters, signs, and tokens. Posthumus and Imogen exchange love tokens — a bracelet and a ring — of which one becomes the apparent proof of her guilt, the other leads to the proof of her innocence ; a letter from Posthumus ensures for Iachimo a welcome at the hands of Imogen ; her answer to it is converted by the art of Iachimo into a corroborative proof of her guilt ; Posthumus' letter, requesting Imogen to meet him at Milford, induces her to fly the Court ; another to Pisanio instructs him to put her to death on the journey ; this last, having been read by her, is the cause of her subsequent wanderings ; Pisanio writes to his master that his orders have been obeyed, and sends him a bloody cloth as a sign of it ; the Emperor issues his "writ" to the tribunes ; he writes to his ambassador Lucius, and Lucius to him ; a letter that Cloten forces from Pisanio is the cause of his seeking the mountains of Wales, where he meets his death, and a letter or "tablet" from no less a personage than Jupiter himself reveals to Posthumus as well his own fortunes as those of his king and country.

The rhetoric of the piece is highly colored with the same notions. Words significant of marks, notes, signs, etc., occur on every page. Observe how deftly the dramatist introduces his leading conceptions, — in describing the cooking of Fidele, Guiderius says “he cut our roots *in characters*,” etc. So, too, Lucius, in giving assurance to the friendless Fidele of his protection, says: —

“The *Roman emperor's* letters  
Sent by a consul to me, should not sooner  
Than thine own words prefer thee.”

The style of *Cymbeline* is narrative or historical, and abounds in recitals of facts and particulars. The characters of the play in their mental processes make use of the inductive method, and their errors arise from concluding upon too few particulars and insufficient evidence. Their arguments, for the most part, have, as the logicians say, no middle, being derived from experience and analogy, from example, induction and parity of reasoning. They draw inferences from like to like, from the past to the present or future, and generalize particular facts into universal truths. A few examples may be cited in order to show the adaptation of the style to the artistic form of the piece as well as of the mental processes of the characters to its philosophy.

The Queen rests her argument for the non-payment of tribute on parity of reasoning and experience.

“That opportunity  
Which then they had to take from us, to resume  
We have again. Remember, sir, my liege,  
The kings your ancestors, together with  
The natural bravery of your isle,” etc.

. . . “A kind of conquest  
Cæsar made here ; but *made not here his brag*  
Of came and saw and overcame : *With shame*  
(*The first that ever touch'd him*), he was carried  
From off our coast twice beaten,” etc.

Cymbeline adds an argument drawn *from example*.

“I am perfect  
That the Pannonians and Dalmatians, for  
Their liberties are now in arms ; a *precedent*  
Which not to read would show the Britons cold :  
So Cæsar shall not find them.”

Posthumus, in his jealous rage, seeks to prove by induction,

that is, the fallacious induction of the logicians or “the enumeration of *all the parts* without instance contradictory” — that *all* the vices of man are derived from woman.

“Could I find out

The woman's part in me ! for there's *no motion*  
*That tends to vice in man*, but I affirm  
*It is the woman's part* ; be 't lying, note it,  
*The woman's* ; flattering, hers ; deceiving, hers ;  
*Lust and rank thoughts*, hers, hers ; revenges, hers ;  
*Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdains,*  
*Nice longings, slanders, mutability,*  
*All faults that may be nam'd*, nay, *that hell knows*,  
*Why, hers, in part or all* ; but rather ALL ;  
 For even to vice, they are not constant,” etc.

Posthumus, when convinced that Imogen, whose purity and truth he had never doubted, is utterly false, is hurried by his feelings into a generalization of the fact.

“Let there be no honor

Where there is beauty ; truth, where semblance ; love,  
 Where there's another man. The *vows of women*  
*Of no more bondage be, to where they are made,*  
*Than they are to their virtues ; which is nothing :*  
*O above measure false.”*

Act II. Sc. 4.

On the other hand, Imogen, whose sound judgment, is rarely led into error, does not herself generalize the case of Posthumus (supposed to be false), but infers that others will do so to the great injury of true and honest men ; and brings forward the examples of Æneas and Sinon as proofs of the injustice worked by such perfidy.

“All good seeming

*By thy revolt, O husband, shall be thought*  
*Put on for villainy ; not born, where 't grows ;*  
*But worn, a bait for ladies.*  
*True honest men being heard, like false Æneas,*  
*Were, in his time, thought false ; and Sinon's weeping*  
*Did scandal many a holy tear ; took pity*  
*From most true wretchedness : So thou, Posthumus,*  
*Wilt lay the leaven on all proper men ;*  
*Goodly and gallant shall be false and perjur'd*  
*From thy great fail.”*

Act III. Sc. 4.

Cloten, assigning reasons for his love, rests his argument on an



induction from those particulars which render Imogen superior to all other women.

“For she’s fair and royal,  
And that she hath all courtly parts more exquisite  
Than lady, ladies, woman ; from every one  
The best she hath, and she of all compounded  
Outsells them all.”

Act III. Sc. 5.

Iachimo, affecting to be amazed that Posthumus should be untrue to Imogen for the sake of one so inferior as her Italian rival, seeks the cause by induction, and, brief as it is, it reminds us of the Baconian method of negatives and exclusion.

“*Imo.* What makes your admiration ?

*Iach.* It cannot be *i’ the eye* ; for apes and monkeys  
’Twixt two such shes would chatter this way, and  
Contemn with mows the other : *Nor i’ the judgment* ;  
For idiots in this case of favor would  
Be wisely definite : *Nor i’ the appetite*,” etc.

Act I. Sc. 5.

Examples could be multiplied *ad libitum*. The habit of mind of all the characters is inductive, and the whole piece is, with a surprising mastery of style, written inductively from beginning to end. There must be excepted, however, the enormous error of Posthumus, who founds his belief in his wife’s guilt upon conclusions drawn from false testimony and other signs.

This analysis, thus far, has treated only of the mental and moral elements of the piece and has left almost untouched its practical or active side which, however, is presented with a similar depth and simplicity. All action springs from a purpose ; for “the wits of men,” says Bacon, “are the shops wherein all actions are forged,” and the business of practical life lies in the prosecution of plans and purposes, from which men expect, if not the attainment of happiness, at least their advancement in wealth or rank. And so in *Cymbeline*, we may observe that the characters are respectively in eager pursuit of some purpose, by which they hope to better their condition and rise in the world. In all undertakings, however, there is an element of risk, which renders their execution subject to the proverbial sway of fortune ; and success in life is, in common speech, the making of one’s fortune. It is this construction of the plot that renders the play (whether accidentally or not) a good illustration of that branch of Civil Know-

ledge laid down by Bacon in his division of the sciences as "the knowledge of negotiation," and more particularly that subdivision of such knowledge which is denominated by him "the Architect of Fortune or the Knowledge of Advancement in Life." This, as a doctrine, was original with Bacon, and is enumerated by him among the deficiencies of learning. Not that the doctrine was not practiced — for every man practices it to some extent — but that it had not been reduced to method and equipped with precepts.

"This doctrine," says Bacon, "has its precepts, some summary and some scattered or various, whereof the former relate to a just knowledge of ourselves and others.

"Knowledge of men may be derived and obtained in six different ways, viz.: by their countenances and expressions, their words, their actions, their dispositions, their ends, and by the report of others." De Aug. Book VIII. ch. 2.

This obviously accords, or rather, is identical with that knowledge of men which, by the theory of the play, we acquire by reading words, looks, and actions; and the same knowledge which enables us to judge of men's worth and assign them their rank, also enables us to estimate their value as assistants in the affairs of life.

The precepts laid down by Bacon for obtaining the knowledge of others and of ourselves are profound and original, but too copious to be quoted at length. Extracts, however, will be made as they may be wanted for particular application.

In addition to these "summary" precepts, Bacon sets forth numerous "scattered and various" ones; and then, after citing sundry pernicious maxims of Machiavelli and other unscrupulous politicians, adds "that of the like depraved doctrines, as in all other things, there are a greater number than of the wise and good. Now if any man takes pleasure in such kind of corrupt wisdom, I will not certainly deny *that with these dispensations from all the laws of charity and virtue and an entire devotion to the pressing of his fortune he may advance it quicker and more compendiously.*" De Aug. Book VIII. ch. 2.

A marked instance of this corrupt and tainted prudence is the Queen. She is entirely "devoted to pressing her fortune," having no thought but for the aggrandizement of herself and family; and so far has she "dispensed with the laws of charity and virtue"

that she is utterly unscrupulous in all respects. Her knowledge of men is profound. She tempts Pisanio with promises of preferment in order to corrupt his fidelity, but all the while looks clean through him and clearly reads his stubborn honesty.

“A sly and constant knave ;

Not to be shak'd : the agent for his master,” etc.

She therefore resolves to remove him, and to that end places in his hands a poison which she assures him is a precious remedy, and this she does with so much kindness in her words that he is imposed upon, though on his guard.

Her dissimulation is absolute and she exemplifies in the highest degree the deceitfulness of words ; nor does her duplicity desert her until the last moment ; she then illustrates that remark of Bacon's who, speaking of knowing men by their words and of the trickery and deceit that lurk in them, says “that there are few *so true to their own secrets and of so close a temper*, but that sometimes through anger, sometimes through bravado, sometimes through a *weakness of mind unable any longer to bear the burden of its thoughts . . . they open and communicate their secret thoughts and feelings*; whence the poet not unjustly calls these perturbations tortures.” De Aug. Book VIII. ch. 2.

And so it falls out with this profoundly close and dissimulating woman, — although in the play the illustration is carried, of course, to an ideal extreme, — the torment of her mind at the absence of her son and the disappointment of her hopes drive her to unbosom her crimes and the long concealed antipathies she had entertained.

“She, failing of her end by his strange absence,  
Grew *shameless-desperate*; open'd, in *despite*  
Of heaven and men, *her purposes*; repented  
*The evils she hatch'd* were not effected ; so  
*Despairing died.*”

Cloten, also, seeks to rise in the world, but he is a negative instance ; an eminent failure. He is an aspirant for the hand of Imogen, the heiress of the throne, partly instigated by his mother's ambitious counsels but more by the conviction that if “he could get this foolish Imogen, he should have gold enough ;” but Cloten's wooing arouses merely hate and scorn ; he therefore tries the arts of policy and attempts to bribe one of the attendants of the princess, which excites only ridicule ; he seeks, moreover,



to corrupt *the fidelity of Pisanio* by promises of preferment, but is met by deception. Even in gaming and playing at bowls — to which he is addicted — fortune does not smile upon him. “Was there ever man had such luck!” he exclaims, “when I kissed the jack, upon an up-cast to be hit away! I had a hundred pounds on ’t.”

Cloten knows neither other men nor himself. His aims are groveling, his plans absurd, his execution rash. Bacon warns men from being carried “by presumption of mind to things too difficult.” Cloten falls into this error. Forgetful that he has been worsted in an assault which he made upon Posthumus, he seeks the forest in order to provoke an encounter with him and put him to death. In his self-confidence and presumption, he thus communes with himself, — and the passage is a good specimen of that irony of fate which this poet is so fond of depicting.

“*What mortality is!* Posthumus, *thy head*, which is now growing upon thy shoulders, shall within this hour be off. . . . *Out, sword,* and to a *sore purpose!*”

Directly after, falling in with Guiderius, he wantonly attacks the young outlaw, who quickly deprives him of his head with the very sword he had drawn for the “sore purpose” of beheading Posthumus.

Belarius is another phase of character, that results from the pursuit of success. He has been a distinguished soldier.

“His report was once  
First with the best of note.  
And when a soldier was the theme, his name  
Was not far off.”

Honored and loved by the king, he had yet been falsely accused of treason, and driven into exile. This injustice does not so much harden his heart nor sour his temper as it opens his eyes to the vanity of ambition and the hollowness of its prizes. To the young lads, who think him their father, he descants feelingly on the arts of the Court and the uncertain favor of princes. Though housed in the rock, he finds a life at honest freedom, “nobler, richer, prouder” than that of the servile and luxurious Court, and has learned from experience,

“That often, to our comfort, shall we find  
The sharded beetle in a safer hold  
Than is the full-wing’d eagle.”

On the other hand, the two young princes are embodiments of that high spirit, which is eager, by some valorous deed, to win distinction. They long for action and to strike a blow for honor. To the prudent advice of the aged Belarius not to join in the approaching battle, they reply : —

*Arr.* What pleasure, sir, find we in life, to lock it  
From action and adventure ?

I am asham'd

To look upon the holy sun, to have  
The benefit of his bless'd beams, remaining  
So long a poor unknown.

*Guid.* By heavens, I'll go," etc.

They join the king's party, and by their valor render services so great that they are rewarded with the highest dignities.

The pursuit of success, however, finds its most direct and forcible instance in Iachimo's attempt to win the wager. This story of the wager in its circumstances and details belongs to mediæval romance, yet the attempt to win is in principle the same as any undertaking in which ability and skill are staked against chances of failure. Fortune is the mistress of events and is always in the field either for us or against us, for not to have bad luck is good luck.

Iachimo enters on the trial at the greatest risk ; on the issue hangs a question of life and death as well as a direct gain or loss of material value. Success can only be secured, if at all, by that prime quality of *boldness* which Bacon, in his Essay on Boldness, declares to be in affairs what action is in oratory, first, second, and third ; and among the particular precepts for success or rising in life, he lays down that "the sinews of fortune are the sinews and steel of men's minds, such as *courage, audacity, resolution, temper,* and the like." Iachimo has apparently studied in the same school and thus apostrophizes this quality : —

" *Boldness*, be my friend !

Arm me, *audacity*, from head to foot !

Or, like the Parthian, I shall flying fight ;

Rather, directly fly."

Iachimo is qualified to command success, were it possible. He possesses audacity in the highest degree, and with this prime quality he also has great knowledge of the world, exceeding cunning, and a fluent and beguiling tongue. But these qualities,

enlisted in the infamous purpose he has in view, stand ridiculously impotent before the "divine Imogen." With great versatility, therefore, in adapting himself to circumstances and with that pliancy "to bend and form his mind to occasions and opportunities" (which is one of Bacon's principal precepts for the attainment of success, while at the same time he warns men not to pursue a losing game too far but "to sound a retreat rather than trust they shall conquer occasions by perseverance"), Iachimo finding that audacity cannot carry the day, at once beats a retreat, and this he does with so much skill that he converts his defeat into the means of gaining an opportunity for practicing a stratagem whereby he may fraudulently win what he had in fairness lost. And in the pursuance of this latter design, his boldness, craft, and knowledge of men enable him so to arouse the passions and blind the judgment of Posthumus as to impose mere delusive proofs of Imogen's guilt upon him.

From the foregoing instances, it is clear that the plot of this play is so constructed as to show characters in the pursuit of their fortunes and that the piece illustrates the spirit and, to some extent, the very letter of Bacon's doctrine on this branch of philosophy. Such an illustration is about all that can be looked for in a drama, inasmuch as the successful pursuit of fortune according to precept is for the most part a matter of time, whereas in a play sudden success is that only which can be well portrayed, and this latter is not so much the result of lawful precept as of that "corrupt and tainted prudence" which Bacon admits "is a short cut to fortune," though he adds "that it is in life as in ways, the shortest way is commonly the foulest and muddiest and surely the fairer way is not much about."

After setting forth his precepts, Bacon adds: "Nor am I so foolish as to assert that fortunes are not gained without all this contrivance which I have mentioned. For I know well they come tumbling into some men's laps and that others only obtain them by simple diligence and attention, using only a little caution without any great or laborious art."

And he passes this judgment on the whole subject, that "no man's fortune can be an end worthy of the gift of being that has been given him by God; and often the worthiest men abandon their fortunes willingly that they may have leisure for higher pursuits." De Aug. Book VIII. ch. 2.



This is true of Imogen: she alone forms no plan for self-aggrandisement; on the contrary she renounces her great fortunes for the sake of her husband, and spends her life in rendering whatever good service may fall in her way. So deeply does she live in her moral nature, so little store does she set by that glitter of rank so much coveted by the world, that she relinquishes the high station that interferes with her happiness, and wishes she were

“A neat-herd’s daughter! and her Leonatus  
Her neighbor-shepherd’s son!”

Yet she is borne on by the tide of events to success and all her heart’s hopes. Her courage and her goodness carry her through, and she exemplifies the remarks of Bacon as well as the saying of Pisanio:—

“Fortune brings in some boats that are not steer’d.”

This analysis could be carried much further; but what has already been said will probably suffice to show

That *Cymbeline* is a dramatic Chronicle-History, which intermingles the events of civil history with fable and romance; and that in addition to this, it is, as far as its compass will allow, a Natural History of Sympathy and Antipathy in man, it being a collection of instances of various forms of love and hate, together with certain secret instincts and sympathies dependent on the blood, which are phenomena of the kind that belong to the Natural History of Man. These feelings and sentiments being those by which men are prompted to action and by which they exercise their judgment in approval or disapproval of the motives of others, the play is history in its origin, its seeds, its essence. In Baconian language, it is history in its “form” or “formal cause.”

Moreover, the main subjects of the dialogue coincide to a remarkable extent with those peculiar and original subdivisions which Bacon makes of the Natural History, pointed out by him as the necessary foundation for philosophy; the first of which or *Generation* is copiously represented by the notions of blood, birth, breeding, family, marriage, etc., out of which springs the whole movement of the plot.

The second head or *Præter-Generation* finds a parallel in the numerous instances of occult sympathies and antipathies, of

dreams, divinations and other fabulous and superstitious matters, which fall in with the legendary and romantic cast of the piece, while to the third head of *Arts* or Mechanical or Experimental History may be referred the frequent mention of works, both of the mechanic and liberal arts, as well as the experiments of the Queen in drugs and poison. In fact, to push the analogy on moral grounds, to this class belong the *trials*, *temptations*, and *experiences* of the characters, particularly the trials by which the truth of Imogen is tested and also the fabrications and machinations resorted to by some of them to gain their purposes.

Another close and remarkable parallelism is found in the observance by the dramatist of that precept which Bacon lays down for the preparation of a Natural History, that all bodies be weighed, measured, and numbered, for in the play, the passions, sentiments, emotions, and thoughts are defined and described by weight, measure, and price.

And still another precept of Bacon that in the compilation of Natural History all statements be plain and devoid of rhetorical ornament is reflected in passages that exemplify in a marked manner both the observance and the violation of the rule.

The curiosity of Cymbeline moreover, expresses itself in a passage, which directly corresponds with Bacon's "topics of enquiry" always appended by him to his histories.

The business of History is to judge of men and their comparative worth and, therefore, the subject of the play involves the *Art of Judging*. This art treats of the nature of proofs. Proof may be either by experience or by testimony; and the superiority of the first as a guide to the judgment, as well as the fallacious nature of the last, is exemplified in the incidents of the piece. The alleged guilt of Imogen is supported only by "signs" and "similar proofs," whereas her innocence is maintained by direct experience. The errors of judgment into which the characters fall — particularly Posthumus — are due to their relying upon testimony, that is, inferences from signs and probabilities rather than upon experience. In the drama, the judgment can be best represented as exercised with reference to men's characters and conduct; and in *Cymbeline* men are known and judged and their worth estimated by being put to the proof. It is by trial that the natures of men are discovered, precisely as by test the properties of any material substance are discovered; in all which



respects, it is evident that the play illustrates the same principles of judgment as those which are laid down by Bacon in *The Art of Judging*, and on which he builds his philosophy.

Furthermore, in the last scene of the play, the various experiences of the different characters, which are scattered through the previous Acts, are collected and tabulated, so far as it can be done in the form of a dialogue, so that by the light mutually shed by them, the ends and purposes and consequently the inmost natures of the persons are made known, which is precisely coincident with Bacon's method of forming of his facts a Table of Discovery, from which flows a true and legitimate induction or form of judgment, which he calls "*The Interpretation of Nature*" and which, moreover, is that branch of the Art of Invention, that he terms the *Invention of Arts*.

The only means of judging of men is by reading their natures as they are written in their words, looks, and gestures; but such interpretation pertains to the *Art of Tradition* or the art of communicating knowledge and to that subdivision of such art which is called "the organ of discourse," which, says Bacon, "has more descendants besides words and letters," viz., gestures, looks and bodily expressions, and in fact, it might be said, acting of all kinds. This doctrine, which Bacon calls "*the notes of things*" is illustrated particularly in the gestures of Posthumus at his departure; also in the simulation and dissimulation of Iachimo and the Queen; in the scene in dumb show or pantomime; in the attempt of Imogen to interpret the looks of Pisanio; and in the free use throughout the play of signs, characters, tokens, and letters as signs significant and vehicles of thought and feeling.

This method, moreover, of interpreting men is connected with another Baconian art, viz., "the art of rising in life," which depends upon a knowledge of men. As the play treats of the comparative worth or rank of men, the fable of the piece places before us characters striving to rise in the world and acquire place and distinction; so that the plot and incidents illustrate Bacon's doctrine which he calls "the art of rising in life or making a man's fortune," or more generally the pursuit of success. Of this art the main precept is to acquire a knowledge of men, which, Bacon says, may be had from their words, their looks, their gestures, etc. This is obviously identical with the interpretation of "the notes and signs of things" above spoken of.



And, lastly, the *Art of Custody* or "the helps to the memory" has an example in Iachimo's taking notes of Imogen's chamber; which, though not peculiar of itself, has significance, when taken in connection with the other branches of the same philosophy, and particularly when it is considered that these notes were thus taken to be used as proofs.

And all these various doctrines and arts are interwoven and blended together in one and the same action, constituting one entire whole, with a skill which calls to mind the silent and unobtrusive working of the creative forces of Nature which blend the manifold influences of divers elements in one organic product.

From all which it appears that *Cymbeline*, as a work of art, is the development and embodiment of the idea of History, — which, as *Civil History*, passes judgment on men and assigns them their rank according as their worth is proved by trial and experience, — and that this more general form wraps up also a *Natural History* made according to the plan laid down by Bacon for the formation of a history as a foundation for philosophy, that is, a collection of particulars arranged so that a true and legitimate induction can be made from them (of which there is a "visible representation" in the last scene of the piece,) and that consequently the play will serve as "an actual type and model," which places before the eyes, as it were, the Baconian method of induction.

The question arises, are the parallelisms, nay, the whole classes of parallelisms above set forth, accidental? And is it accidental also that these classes of instances, which coincide with so many various connected branches of the same philosophy, should all be found in one and the same play? Similitudes between two contemporary authors are generally attributed to "the spirit of the age;" but could the spirit of the age have stamped so deeply the same impress upon two great original minds as to render identical not merely the general scope and drift of their philosophy but also the scientific division and technical details of it? Are not, in short, these coincidences so numerous, pointed, special, coherent, and systematic that it would violate all the doctrine of chances to consider them casual? But if on the other hand, they are intentional, then, inasmuch as these doctrines of Bacon, which are principally reflected in the play, were not revealed by him to the world at the time the play was written, it must follow that the

dramatist had a knowledge of such doctrines with their peculiar subdivisions from the philosopher himself. This would imply a most intimate relation existing between Bacon and Shakespeare; yet one of which their contemporaries apparently had no knowledge and the nature of which must be left entirely to conjecture.

## THE WINTER'S TALE.

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

By the following analysis of *The Winter's Tale* it is intended to show that of the three leading divisions made by Bacon of Learning into History, Poetry, and Philosophy, the play illustrates Poetry as an art and more particularly dramatic art as practiced by "Shake-speare."

And that of the Logical Arts according to Bacon's division of them, it exemplifies the *Art of Invention* in that branch of it which treats of the *Invention of Arguments*.

Also the *Art of Judging* in that branch of it which treats of proof and demonstration made by *Syllogism*,

Also the *Art of Transmission* in that branch of it which treats of the *ornament of discourse* or *Rhetoric*.

That it also gives examples of *Civil Knowledge* in that subdivision which is called the *Art of Conversation* or *Wisdom of Behavior*.

Also in that subdivision called the *Art of Business* and particularly in that branch thereof called *The Doctrine of Scattered Occasions* or *Counsel in Emergencies of Life*.

And, further, that the whole play exemplifies the use of the *Deductive* Logic on which were built the popular philosophies of the day, and which, however effective in sciences resting on opinion and words, was useless to advance true knowledge, as it left all new discoveries to be made by *Time* and *Chance*—*vide* De Aug. Book V. Cap. 2; also Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 73.

*The Winter's Tale* is therefore the opposite and counterpart of *Cymbeline*, in which is represented the Method of Induction according to Bacon.



## THE WINTER'S TALE.

*The Winter's Tale* — as the title denotes — is a “feigned history,” a work of imagination. It looks upon life as an art of which the aim is to copy the beautiful. Itself a work of art, it also imitates a work of art; in fact, it is in this imitation that its own art consists; yet it is the one Shakespearian play that is invariably pointed to as a proof of the rude method and lamentable ignorance of its writer generally; but this opinion it is believed is so far from being correct, that, contrariwise, *The Winter's Tale* is a play which exemplifies with great beauty and in an extreme case the principles of art in general and of Shakespearian art in particular; and that in it the poet proposed an end which required the greatest dramatic skill to execute and which nothing less than his complete mastery over his subject together with a practiced hand as a play-writer enabled him to attain. That end was the imitation of both the likeness and the difference involved in all imitative art. On the simultaneous perception of the likeness of the copy to the original and yet its difference from it, the pleasure derived from the imitative arts seems to depend.<sup>1</sup> The likeness must not be so strong as to be thought a reality or the pleasure ceases, as may be seen in cases of disagreeable objects, of which, however, the imitation often gives pleasure; while on the other hand, if the difference is too great, the imitation itself fails. But the idea of a winter's tale is that of an old rude story, devised for pastime among a rustic people to while away the long and stormy nights of winter; and in such a work the difference arising from imperfect art will be quite as striking as any likeness it bears to reality. To imitate this feature, the poet gives to his play the style and character of the supposed narrator of *The Winter's Tale*. He makes his piece a narrative in dramatic form, in which the personages do not as in most of his plays speak their own sentiments and feelings in their own language, but are repre-

<sup>1</sup> “Les arts d'imitation,” says Diderot, “sont toujours fondés sur une hypothèse; ce n'est pas le vrai qui nous charme; c'est le mensonge approchant de la vérité le plus près possible.”

sented as they appear in and through the imagination of the narrator. The characters charm us by their truth, but still are tinged with a coloring not their own. Thus, in *The Winter's Tale* the dramatist not only imitates nature, but also art in its imitation of nature. To mingle touches of nature and art, to be true to life and at the same time discrepant from it, and to render such discrepancy a special beauty,—this double end the poet set before himself, and it will readily be acknowledged that nothing less than the most surpassing skill could accomplish it.

By looking at the style and manner in which the story is told, a knowledge is gained of the main characteristics of the storyteller. Simple-minded, credulous, imaginative, and unlearned, the narrator is one who half believes the legend narrated; who, buried in rural seclusion, afar from the great world, knows nothing of courts but from hearsay; whose only knowledge of history and geography has been derived from a little reading of romances, and to whom all things of note beyond the immediate and narrow horizon of an humble life are invested with an undue importance by the exaggerations of the imagination. To such a person, a king of Sicily or Bohemia is a mighty potentate, of absolute power and unbridled passions, who existed in some dim indefinite period of the past and who was surrounded with all that is rare and magnificent; yet when depicted by this narrator, necessarily, of manners, language and sentiments frequently not rising in elegance or dignity above those of a coarse and illiterate country squire. So, too, the great lords and high officers of state, though exhibiting a certain elevation and refinement of mind, often drop back into a bluntness of speech and deportment, which hints as much, if not more, familiarity on their part with the customs and manners of a yeoman's life than with the ceremonies and usages of a court. Their diction, their metaphors, and most of their illustrations are drawn from rural life and occupations, and throughout the play, elegant as are some of the scenes and particularly the last, there is scarce an allusion that might not naturally fall within the scope of a rustic's knowledge. In brief, an undue exaggeration of things unknown, because idealized by the imagination, but painted and described in the homely style and phraseology natural to one of limited experience, is a prominent characteristic of *The Winter's Tale*. Hence, too, the many provincialisms in language, and the manifold blunders, so called,

in geography and history, together with the extraordinary confusion of customs and manners that prevails throughout the play — all are attributable to the artless character and imperfect knowledge of the narrator of the story. The famous blunder of giving to Bohemia a sea-coast, which has been harped on from the days of Ben Jonson to the present time, is in fact a stroke of art. We are generally told that the apparent ignorance exhibited in this play is the fault of Greene, the author of "Paredosto," and that the poet, in dramatizing Greene's novel, did not stop to correct the mistakes and absurdities he met with; but it so happens that most of the best "blunders" are of his own invention, but few comparatively having been taken from Greene. The Bohemian seaport and the transfer of Delphi to an island are from the novel, and they are good as far as they go; but they by no means sufficed for the play-writer's purpose of giving the requisite tone and coloring to his piece. He was writing an old and marvelous winter's tale, and so far from wishing to display "skill in the science of geography," he throws all precise knowledge to the winds. His chief care is to appear ignorant, and he therefore brings in a pagan shepherdess who speaks of "Whitsun pastorals," and pagan clowns who talk of "a bearing cloth for a squire's child" and "Christian burial" and "boors and franklins" and "a Puritan who sings psalms to hornpipes," together with many other absurdities and inconsistencies; and in conclusion he caps the climax of anachronism by showing us a statue of Giulio Romano, and all this in the days of the Delphic oracle. And as an instance of how careful he was to paint in his effects, it is worthy of remark that finding in the novel mention made of "the Emperor of Russia" as father of the queen of Egistus (Polixenes) — a queen who appears neither in the novel nor the play — and unwilling to lose so fine an anachronism and one so well suited to his purpose, he adopts it and puts it into the mouth of Hermione (queen of Leontes) on occasion of her trial. Here then is an absurdity not owing to a blind adherence to the novel, but to a voluntary departure from it.

The first scene of Act III. between Cleomenes and Dion, who have but just returned from Delphi, is a good instance of the poet's mode of handling his subject. This scene contains a description of the oracle and of the awe inspired by its response. The style is, therefore, heightened to correspond with the dignity



of the subject, whilst the character of the narrator of *The Winter's Tale* is still kept in view by the geographical mistake of transferring the seat of the oracle to an island, but more particularly by the extravagant tone of the description which indicates the simple-minded wonder this far-away and marvelous place excited in the imagination.

When the scene is carried from the Court to the country and the play becomes pastoral, the narrator is more at home. Still all is ideal. Perdita and Doricles are patterns of extra purity and trust, the clowns are more simple than simpletons, and Autolycus more roguish than rogues usually are.

A good specimen of this extravagance of style that proceeds from a heated imagination, and is therefore akin to poetic enthusiasm, may be found in the account given of the opening of the fardel and of the astonishment of the two kings and their retinues at the discovery of Perdita's birth and parentage: "*They seemed almost with staring on one another to tear the cases of their eyes ; there was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gestures ; they looked as they had heard of a world ransomed or one destroy'd,*" etc.

With marvelous art, too, is the character of Perdita drawn, — a shepherdess, with a nimbus of classic grace ; a rustic of in-born dignity and elegance, yet touched in the portrayal with just enough of consciousness to betray the fact that she is the mouth-piece of one who intends her for an ideal of naïveté and innocence, but who a little overcharges the picture. All the sentiments she utters are perfectly true to nature, but some of them are such as in the presence of strangers and on a public occasion would be repressed by maiden shame, and indeed hardly whispered to her own heart : we perceive the narrator in the fact that she utters them.

In like manner, the abrupt transitions of feeling — specially instanced in Leontes' jealousy — may be accounted for. The passion, though in its nature spontaneous, does not begin with slight suspicions and work itself to a climax, as would have been natural in one whose manner and words just before had been so affectionate to his wife and friend ; but inasmuch as he is, in some measure, the figure through which the narrator speaks, he is represented as under the influence of a passion that springs suddenly into life full-grown. It is as if we were told, " Now Leontes

became jealous." But then this passion is depicted with amazing truth and power (and coarse in itself is rendered somewhat more coarse by the supposed want of refinement in the imagination whence the story proceeds), and at the end subsides and disappears as abruptly as it arose.

Equally felicitous in the execution of this dramatic Winter's Tale is the blending of the dramatic and the narrative. The whole play is a *tale* and is filled with word painting. Not to speak of such obvious passages as Antigonus' account of the vision that appears to him, or Autolycus' description of the clowns he entranced with his songs, or of the narration of the opening of the fardel, or of the picture the old Shepherd draws of his housewife, the dialogue is rendered descriptive and each character has some relation to make of the others. What can be more vivid than Leontes' rehearsal of the signs of illicit love he pretends to have witnessed between Hermione and Polixenes? How sweetly does Florizel describe Perdita's speaking and singing and dancing? What a miniature finish is given to Paulina's portrayal of the new-born babe and its resemblance to its father! How picturesque is the Clown's account of the storm that wrecks the vessel of Antigonus, couched though it be in language and figures characteristically low and undignified! How fine on the other hand is Cleomenes' and Dion's sketch of Delphi and the oracle! In the last scene, the amazement of Leontes and the others is made to express itself in such manner as to describe the appearance of the Statue; and to descend to minuter particulars (if it be not to put too fine a point upon it), mark the use of descriptive epithets in a way natural to one narrating the events but not usual in characters speaking for themselves, as in this of Paulina:

"If I prove honey mouth'd, let my tongue blister  
And never to my *red-look'd* anger be  
The trumpet any more."

The epithet "*red-look'd*" applied by Paulina to her own anger is not dramatic, but descriptive of a phase in her own appearance not obvious to herself but of which notice would naturally be taken by one painting her passion.

The novel on which the play is founded is thus entitled:—

"Pandosto, *The Triumph of Time*, wherein is discovered by a pleasant history that although by the means of sinister fortune *Truth may be concealed, yet by Time in spite of Fortune, it is most manifestly revealed . . . Temporis filia veritas.*"



In this title are found both the moral and philosophical purport of the play. With respect to the latter, it will suffice at present to say that the adage, "Truth is the daughter of time," directly refers to that condition of human knowledge so much deplored by Bacon as the result of the old philosophies, which, being based upon words and syllogisms, were powerless in the investigation of nature and left all useful discoveries to Chance and Time.

But on the moral side, it is Man in his relations to Time, through whose mutations the truth is revealed, guilt exposed, calumny refuted, and reputations vindicated, that the poet purposes to represent. Time stands as agent for retributive justice, and, as such, becomes the moral background of the piece. The whole play is consequently written over with passages indicating the lapse of time, ranging from "an eternity" to "a wink of the eye," with contrasts between youth and age, birth and death, and frequent allusions to periods of life and seasons of the year. The characters dwell upon reminiscences that compare the present with the past, or they anticipate with joy or fear the contingencies of the future. In addition, the notions of breeding, growth, heirdom, succession, and also those of chance, change, and alteration are continually presented; and so familiarized does the mind become with the frequent mention made of intervals and periods of time that the intervention of sixteen years between the third and fourth acts falls in harmoniously with this general impression made of time's flight and its necessary connection with the growth and issue of human affairs; so that the imagination is enabled to embrace readily in one view and draw into unity a series of events spread over many years. The theory of this play-writer evidently was (as his practice proves) that dramatic time — like the drama itself — is purely ideal and belongs to the domain of the imagination, and consequently it can be lengthened or shortened at pleasure, provided the imagination has any foothold to stand upon; therefore any series of events that is ideally connected is capable of dramatic sequence; even in actual life in cases where the relation of cause and effect is perceived, time drops off as an unessential circumstance. In *The Winter's Tale* the idea of the piece requires that a long lapse of time shall be brought into view that the truth that lies at the bottom of the piece may receive a full and adequate illustration. Violation of the so-called unity of time is essential to the effective execution of the design of the



piece, as is the case in *Cymbeline* with regard to the violation of the unity of place.

But *The Winter's Tale* has been condemned as a work of art by critics of the highest name on account of its utter disregard of the unities of place and time, and certainly if these mechanical unities are essential to the production of a dramatic whole the piece is open to such censure. The scene is laid partly in Sicily and partly in Bohemia, and the poet creates the impression that these places are immensely remote from each other; he introduces a gap of sixteen years between the third and fourth acts; and as for the unity of action, the play is made up of two plays, each having its own action, its own heroine, and its own set of subordinate characters. The first three acts, of which the scene is laid in Sicily and which are serious, not to say tragic, in tone, are taken up with the accusation, trial, and apparent death of Hermione; the fourth act is an idyllic comedy, which presents a sheep-shearing festival in Bohemia, and is occupied with the loves of Florizel and Perdita and the rogueries of Autolycus; but in the fifth act, this pair of plays is welded together and unity of interest given to their widely contrasted actions by the discovery of the parentage of Perdita and the consequent reappearance of Hermione, the reconciliation of the two kings, the reunion of Hermione and Leontes, the marriage of the two young lovers and also of Paulina and Camillo, whereby each of the pairs that had been estranged and separated are reunited and the play ends with the general accord of all parties.

This disregard of critical canons may, no doubt, be set down among those features of the play which are introduced for the purpose of imitating the artlessness and imperfections of a winter's tale, but in that case, if no deeper principle of unity can be found in the comedy, it will prove really as rude as the tale it imitates. Besides, it should be observed that the dramatist, instead of smoothing the way by some rhetorical artifice, as he often does in other plays, for the reception by the imagination of these gaps in time and space, takes pains to exaggerate them; they enter into his plan. It would seem then that finding in Pandosto a fable such as suited his purpose, yet one which violates all the formal unities, he seized on this feature of the story and converted it into a positive beauty by making it characteristic of the rude art he imitates, while at the same time

he uses it as a foil to render more conspicuous his own method by which he infuses unity into the most refractory materials and reduces them to an æsthetic whole.

However regardless of ordinary dramatic rules this writer may have been, he never neglected the two essential qualities of a work of imitative art, — that is, *likeness* or truth to nature in the parts and the *union* or combination of the parts in one whole. Of such a work, the simplest type is one of two parts or a *pair* of things or persons, as a pair of friends or of lovers, of which the parts, though dissimilar and disunited, are bound in unity by a *moral* tie and are therefore typical of any organic whole in which the parts being reciprocally related, are integrated by a principle of union. Of such a pair, we find a description in the play.

“*Sicilia cannot show himself over-kind to Bohemia. They were train’d together in their childhoods and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now. Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made separation of their society, their encounters, though not personal, have been royally attorneyed with interchange of gifts, letters, loving embassies, that they have seemed to be together, though absent, shook hands as over a vast, and embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds. The heavens continue their loves!*” Act I. Sc. 1.

This forcible and significant picture of a pair of friends, who, notwithstanding the widest possible personal separation, still seem to be together and are held in union by the continuance of their loves, is an excellent analogon or type (were one wanted) of a work of Shakespearian art; for such a work disregards intervals of space and time, provided its parts are held in unity by a moral bond. And in fact, as the poet, whose purpose it seems to have been to give dramatic embodiment to the ideas that underlie the relations necessarily incident to human nature, he aimed at the representation of human life as influenced by principles of which the operation frequently could not be developed within any narrow compass of space and time. As in this play, for example, which represents Man in relation to time as the discoverer of truth, it is essential to the full development of this conception that a long flight of years shall be imagined to have passed within the time of the play, and therefore the dramatist, so far from seeking to preserve the unity of time or to keep the action of the piece “within one revolution of the sun,” fills our imaginations

with a sense of the lapse of time and expands the brief period of representation into a long tract of years.

But if *The Winter's Tale* be a work which may be taken as a model to exemplify in an extreme case the Shakespearian method, the principles of such method must necessarily be deducible from it; and upon looking into it, it will be found, it is believed, that the following characteristics are demanded in a complete Shakespearian tragedy or comedy.

First, it must be founded on an idea having both an artistic and a moral side: as an artistic idea, it will be one which underlies some *special form of writing, literary or scientific*, while on its moral side, it will furnish the standard of judgment in that sphere of thought and sympathy, of which the "literary form" — and, by consequence, the play — is an expression. For instance, in this play, the artistic idea is that of a "winter's tale," which, as a work of imitative art, copies the beautiful and demands that the play shall possess the spirit and features of such a work, while morally, the *beau idéal* (in character) is the standard of judgment when life is viewed as an art; or to take the case of *Cymbeline*, which adopts as its law "the form" of History or judgment on the comparative merits of men as tested by actual proof; as an artistic idea, this law renders the play a living History in which the characters judge of the comparative worth of men as proved *by experience*, but in framing these judgments, they take as a moral standard that measure of excellence which *experience* has taught each man of his own and others' capabilities. The idea of a play when fully embodied in a character (as that of *Cymbeline* is embodied in Imogen) is an ideal and the Shakespearian drama furnishes a gallery of ideals that exhaust the most important relations of life. Just as Shakespeare's characters are not individuals only, but types of classes, so his fables are not simply stories concerning the fortunes of this or that personage, but embrace some wide and special domain of thought and action. The moral idea of a play is the main source of its unity, for the characters, however varied and separated by events, are all related to this idea, some being full impersonations of it, as many of the heroines; others being its direct negative, which produces characters like Iago, Goneril, Regan, The Weird Sisters, and others, while others, again, represent partial and different shades of character arising from the struggle of the good and evil princi-



ples in men's natures, as is particularly instanced in the great tragic heroes. In *The Winter's Tale*, the moral idea, stated in the briefest terms, is "the good and fair" which has its most ordinary and practical form in the sentiment and principle of Honor; and it can be readily seen how characters having no dramatic connection in the action of the play and utterly unlike each other, as for instance, Mamillius and Autolycus, can be combined in one effect; Mamillius having so exquisite a sense of honor that he dies of shame at his mother's disgrace, whilst Autolycus is ashamed of nothing but of doing a creditable action; so that these parts may be said to illustrate the positive and negative poles of the same principle.

A second requisite for a Shakespearian play deducible from this comedy is that its action and dialogue be so constructed as to exemplify some philosophical doctrine or branch of learning.

All the institutions of man are, of course, but the outgrowth of his nature; and in the pursuit of his ends either for the gratification of his desires, or the supply of his wants, he makes use of means and methods, which, when digested into rules, become the various arts of life, as, for example, his love of order gives rise to the State and the art of government; his desire for safety to physiology and the medical art; his love of pleasure and the indulgence of the fancy to the drama and the dramatic art, also to works of fiction and the laws of taste; the desire to convince and persuade to logic and rhetoric; his love of beauty to the fine arts and æsthetics; his love of honor to courtesy, fine manners, and rules of decorum; and so on through the whole circle of sentiments, desires, and appetites. As Bacon says, "Nothing can be found in the material globe which has not its correspondent in the crystalline globe—the understanding; or that there is nothing to be found in *practice* which has not its particular *doctrine* or *theory*." And the dramatist was evidently of the same way of thinking, for he always incorporates into his play, and so illustrates, the leading principles of that doctrine or science or art that results from the working of those feelings and faculties and the pursuit of those ends which are represented in the piece. This coincidence of the philosophical with the moral significance of the play imparts great depth and unity to the piece. And a play is a philosophical parable as well as an amusing poem and an instructive lesson in life.

A third requisite of the Shakespearian method as taught us by *The Winter's Tale* is that a play must possess its own distinct rhetoric specially adapted to its subject; that all which constitutes manner and style, cast of thought, modes of expression, forms of phrases, classes of imagery and metaphors, choice of words, must be consonant with the leading theme of the piece and in fact be shaped and dictated by it; so that the two opposite conceptions involved in the observance and the infraction of the moral rule that underlies the action, shall be constantly repeated and made to pulsate, as it were, throughout the play.

But, further, if *The Winter's Tale* be really such an exemplar of Shakespearian art as is here supposed, then it must possess all these requisites in their most general form; it must not only possess a special rhetoric peculiar to itself but must illustrate the art of rhetoric; it must not only rest on an idea that is artistic, but such idea must be the idea of a work of art generally, and on its moral side must be inclusive of all others and furnish a ground as well for the first three acts, which are ennobled by the dignity of Hermione, as for the fourth act, which is beautified by the grace of Perdita, and at the same time be a sufficient rule for the fine courtesy and elegance of the closing scenes of the piece; while the philosophy of the play, instead of being confined to some special doctrine of civil knowledge, must present the general principles of that philosophy which considers Man in Society.

To make this clear, it will be necessary to set forth that view of life with its special principles that constitutes the moral scheme or platform of the piece, which is none other than its idea writ large. To do this will enable us to account for the tone and coloring — the moral atmosphere, so to speak — of the play, and will unfold those conceptions which are embodied in the characters and are exemplified in their actions and manners.

Ordinarily, the fundamental principles of a Shakespearian play are so familiar in their application and so close to us in daily use that we never think of analyzing them; the following, however, seem to furnish the moral basis of *The Winter's Tale*.

The power of Time to reveal the truth is made practical and effective chiefly through Speech. Without language, Society, if it could exist at all, would have neither a past nor a future; all transmission of intelligence would cease, the knowledge of every man would die with him, and the intellectual progress of the world



be ended. Neither in such case could there be public opinion nor private reputation, the sentiment of honor would be unknown and the voice of calumny — a blessed compensation! — would be hushed forever. Among the uses of speech stand foremost persuasion and instruction. To attain our ends, we beg, entreat, pray, adjure, promise, in fine, use all means of persuasion; or to benefit others, we give instruction or counsel, which last is the most valuable service and the most sacred trust between man and man. Counsel is the soul of business and no important step in life can be safely taken without it. To give or to receive wise counsel, and thereby remove in others or ourselves the troubles of the heart or the perplexities of business, is one of the honorablest offices and rarest fruits of friendship. Thus Bacon says: "No receipt openeth the heart like a true friend to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of *civil shrift* or *confession*;" and in the same spirit Leontes says to his counselor, Camillo: —

"I have trusted thee, Camillo;  
With all the near'st things to my heart, as well  
My chamber-councils: wherein, *priest-like*, those  
*Hast cleans'd my bosom*; I from thee departed  
Thy *penitent reform'd*."

Both persuasion and instruction, which in their various forms have a range from the lisping of the child to the oratory of the senate-house, may be comprised under the head of the communication of knowledge. There are two sources of knowledge: experience and testimony. The facts of which any one individual has certain knowledge are only those which fall under his own observation and form but an infinitesimal portion of the great mass that makes up the whole truth; all else to him is but *opinion*, that is, probability or likelihood supported by testimony. In the most trivial as in the most important matters, trust must be placed in the sayings and information of others, that is, in testimony, and the sum of the knowledge possessed by any community is the result of the incessant interchange of intelligence between its individual members as eye-and-ear witnesses. Every man, however limited his sphere of action, can contribute some knowledge, whereby he may often, unwittingly, supply a necessary link in a chain of proof, as for instance, the old Shepherd



in the play communicates facts known only to himself, which establish the royal birth of Perdita ; and thus through the endless intermingling of human affairs — “the infinite doings of the world” — facts of the greatest moment which have been lost for years to view and which lie entirely beyond the reach of systematic inquiry are frequently brought to light by what is called Time and Chance.

The conception of Time, therefore, as the revealer of truth is resolved into the concurrent or equivalent conception that *Speech is testimony* and consequently the foundation of *belief, persuasion, and opinion* among men. This practically carries forward the movement of the plot: all and each of the characters are attempting to prove some point or impress some belief or opinion upon others of what they have witnessed or what they assert to be true. Evidence, both direct and secondary ; simple statements depending on the veracity of the speaker, vehement assertions, protestations, declarations under oath, adjurations, formal attestations, circumstantial evidence, and the infallible oracles of the Gods — all are illustrated. Even trial by combat is alluded to. Corresponding with these different degrees of proof, assent is exemplified throughout its different grades from belief in the prognostications of a dream up to an implicit faith in divine revelation. The world, as viewed in this fantastic legend, is but a witness-stand where every man is telling his tale and giving testimony to some fact having pertinency, near or remote, to those issues made up for purposes of retributive justice between Divine Power and erring Humanity.

Testimony commands our belief in proportion to the veracity of the speaker and its *likelihood* or *likeness* to what we know to be true. But even where the witness is honest, there are so many errors of the sense and judgment, to say nothing of perversions by prejudice, interest, and passion, that in a great majority of instances the conclusions derived from this source are mere opinion or conjecture. In fact, all knowledge, unless it be grounded on experience, is theory, and the common opinions of men are almost wholly so. “You shall find all men,” says Berkeley, “full of opinions, but knowledge only in a few. A simple apprehension of conclusions as taken in themselves without the deductions of science is what falls to the share of mankind in general. Religion and the precepts of parents and masters, the

wisdom of legislators and the accumulated experience of ages supply the place of proofs and reasoning with the vulgar of all ages."

All counsel and advice are asked and given upon the supposition that opinion is a sufficient guide to the judgment; but how far opinions — derived too often from loose and inadequate experience — differ from true knowledge, is exemplified in the proverbial disagreement of the most learned pundits and doctors.

As the aim of speech is to persuade and win belief, honesty is its indispensable requisite. The rule is thus stated in the play by Archidamus: "Believe me, I speak as mine *understanding* instructs me and mine *honesty* puts it to utterance." From the sturdy stock honesty springs the bright flower Honor, which is the esteem and favorable opinion that attend on Veracity, and a regard for truth. This esteem, when expressed in speech, becomes good name and reputation, the loss of which the honorable man considers the greatest calamity of life. Thus Polyxenes, accused of the grossest dishonor, invokes as his greatest punishment, —

"O then my best blood turn  
To an infected jelly; and my name  
*Be yok'd with his that did betray the Best!*  
Turn then my *freshest* reputation to  
A savour that may strike the dullest nostril  
Where I arrive and my approach be shunn'd,  
Nay, *hated* too, worse than the great'st infection  
That e'er was heard or read."

Act I. Sc. 2.

Moral differences among men give rise to a scale of merit and the establishment of rank, which is the outward symbol of honor. And rank being inheritable, honor attaches to family and birth and is therefore especially looked for as a principle of conduct in the gentry or that class, which on account of its refinement and elegance derived from breeding and culture, has been styled "the Corinthian capital of Society." Among this class flourishes (theoretically) in its highest state the sentiment of honor or pride of character, a lofty self-respect, which disdains whatever is unhandsome or base. This sentiment renders men keenly sensitive to all that touches good name and inspires a quick sympathy in this regard with the wrongs of others. To this feeling in Camillo, Polyxenes appeals.

"Camillo,

As you are certainly a gentleman, thereto  
 Clerk-like, experienced, which no less adorns  
 Our gentry, than our parents' noble names  
 In whose success we are gentle, — I beseech you  
 If you know aught which does behove my knowledge  
 Thereof to be inform'd imprison it not  
 In ignorant concealment."

Act I. Sc. 2.

Virtue being the condition of rank or the tenure by which high station is held, all true nobility rests upon it. Without this attribute, neither king nor noble is entitled to the higher appellation of gentleman. And inasmuch as it is goodness that wins admiration, so it is the highest goodness, the supreme model or idea of good that wins the highest admiration and is the pattern of the man of honor. By *copying this exemplar* man is ennobled, and grace and dignity imparted to life. This, too, possesses that divine beauty which has shed a lustre on the true gentlemen and heroes of all ages, and which it has ever been the aim of the artist and the poet, particularly the dramatic poet, to embody; the one in form and color; the other, in mimic life and action. This standard of truth and goodness, this rule of grace and beauty, — for truth and goodness and beauty are but different aspects of the *Best*, — comprises as well the grand and severe virtues that confer dignity on character as the minor morals and proprieties, which give gracefulness to manners and render conduct becoming.

Of characters in which dignity and grace are blended we have examples in Hermione and Perdita; in Hermione grace being subordinated to dignity, while in Perdita dignity is subordinated to grace.

The moral ideal, when carried to its highest pitch, becomes that "beauty of holiness" that belongs to the Divine Exemplar, and which is alluded to in the play as the "*Best*."

"My name

Be yok'd with his that did betray the *Best*."

Act I. Sc. 2.

The perfect model of "the good and fair," which is aimed at by art, exists in the mind alone; it cannot be made by selections of what actually exists in nature. To one asking Raffaele where he found those forms of beauty with which he enriched his can-



vas, he replied that "they were ideals that sprung up in his mind."<sup>1</sup> So Bacon says: "A man cannot tell whether Apelles or Albert Dürer were the more triflers, whereof the one would make a personage by geometric proportion; the other by *taking the best parts out of divers faces to make one excellent.*" A similar doctrine is found in the play, transferring only to moral beauty what Bacon says of physical, for Hermione, who stands for an ideal of goodness, is thus compared with the excellence of natural life: —

"If one by one you wedded all the world  
Or, *from the all that are took something good*  
To make a perfect woman, she (Hermione)  
Would be unparallel'd."

Act V. Sc. 1.

The ideal of virtue and beauty of conduct is not the same in all minds; it will vary according to the knowledge and sensibility of him who forms it; it will be most exalted and refined in the wisest and best; and as these hold, theoretically, the first rank, we must look for the highest standard and the brightest examples of honor and courtesy to the class of gentlemen at the head of which stands the king, who therefore should be the pattern of all nobleness and gracefulness both in morals and in manners. This truth Leontes expresses, when conscious that his actions are taken for the rule, he says to Hermione who is supposed by him to be guilty of the grossest dishonor: —

"O thou thing  
Which I'll not call a creature of thy place  
*Lest barbarism, making me the precedent*  
*Should a like language use to all degrees*  
And mannerly distinguishment leave out  
Betwixt the prince and beggar."

Act II. Sc. 1.

In the affairs of life the one unavoidable topic of speech is character. In all dealings, men's motives and actions are necessarily implicated and made the theme of discussion. Every man is subject to moral criticism and is praised or blamed, accused or defended, held in honor or contempt, according to the moral quality of his words and conduct. In passing judgment on men, we have two standards, of one or the other of which we make use according to circumstances. One of these standards is what we

<sup>1</sup> "Mi servo di certa idea che mi viene alla mente."

know of men from our own experience; the other is the ideal of human perfection. In *Cymbeline*, which gives a view of practical life, we have man as a subject of natural history, of whose nature or qualities we gain knowledge by trial and experience; man as we know him in our daily walks; mortal man, subject to birth, growth, sickness, hunger, pain, death, and we may add, burial. In *Cymbeline*, therefore, men are represented as judging of each other by direct and positive evidence, derived from actual test and personal observation; and the standard assumed is that common grade of excellence, which we learn from experience prevails among men, and above or below which as they rise or sink, are they praised or blamed. Moreover, in *Cymbeline* men are compared with each other with a view of determining their rank or relative place.

In *The Winter's Tale*, which is an imaginary story or life at second-hand, the poet with the nicest propriety treats of those judgments of men's motives and actions, which in the absence of direct proof, are founded upon hearsay or reputation, that is, upon testimony. These judgments, although all men are exposed to them, are necessarily more frequently called out by the more remarkable examples, whether of good or evil, which society furnishes, and also by the distinguished characters of history and fiction. But in judging of men's reputations, that is, of the opinions and speeches of other men about them (which is but the weighing of evidence) we must rely for determining the truth upon *inferences* and *reasoning from signs and probabilities*; and our standard of judgment is no longer confined to our own narrow observation and experience, particularly in the case of eminent and illustrious personages or the characters of history and fiction, but is that ideal which is formed of the mind's conceptions of possible excellence; derived, in some measure, no doubt, from all we have heard or read of what is best in human nature, yet in the main created by the imagination. And in *The Winter's Tale*, unlike *Cymbeline*, men are not compared with a view of establishing their relative place, but the question is, how good is a man of his kind? how much honor or how high a reputation does he deserve? how near does he come to the ideal?

It is obvious that this *beau idéal* or rule of goodness and grace is not a constant measure for all men, inasmuch as manners that are suitable for one class are quite unbecoming in another, and

that which is graceful conduct will vary with time, place, age, sex, and condition. Each class has its own standard of what is best, and this will explain the frequent use of phrases in the play, signifying what is especially graceful and decorous under given circumstances, as for instance —

“A father

Is at the nuptials of his son, a guest  
That *best becomes the table.*”

“I'll point you where you shall have such receiving  
As *shall become your highness.*”

“She shall be habited *as becomes*  
The partner of your bed.”

“Black brows, they say, *become some women best.*”

“The office *becomes a woman best.*”

“As might *become a lady like me,*” —

and others which refer to what is fit and becoming in particular instances as distinguished from any general rule.

In its weight as testimony, good name has a practical value beyond any gratification of pride it may occasion; for character is a fact which goes far to prove the truth of whatever its possessor asserts, while it also in a great degree tests the probability of whatever is asserted concerning him. Reports affecting character, particularly if they be damaging ones, fly, like an infection, from mouth to mouth and are believed and circulated without any proof whatever. Slander and scandal are rife in every society, against which there is no defense unless it be in a perfect *integrity* of life. Such a life is all of a piece; like a perfect work of art, it is a well-rounded whole, “*totus, teres atque rotundus.*” Every part is consistent with the whole; and the whole, as an integral part, is consistent with all truth. Calumny, therefore, in the long run, as time and circumstances work to develop the truth, will be powerless against it.

But the man of honor, besides being watchful of his own reputation, is exceedingly tender of that of others. He recognizes the duty of grounding beliefs and opinions affecting character upon sufficient knowledge, and shrinks from harboring suspicions, much more from preferring accusations, except upon the most un-



questionable evidence. With him, veracity is all in all, and it is essential to veracity that the observations of the senses, which furnish the materials of knowledge, should be interpreted without bias or coloring from passion or interest. This rule is constantly violated by the envies and jealousies that infest Society and use detraction as an habitual weapon; but its grossest infraction springs from a frame of mind constitutionally suspicious, which, when stimulated by sexual love and the apparent preference of a rival, is capable of every baseness, falsehood, cruelty, meanness, and revenge. This vile passion claims for its own imaginings all the credit due to facts, and while looking through a jaundiced medium that discolours all objects of its sense, arrogates to itself an infallible discernment and knowledge of the world. But these gross and silly phantoms of the brain are in the end exposed by Time through the discovery of new proofs, whilst the community in order to protect itself from defamation and the circulation of false intelligence visits the slanderer and the liar with the deepest contempt and shame.

The foregoing seem to be the main points or among the main points in the moral scheme of the piece; they are an expansion of the idea that life is an art of which the aim is to copy the Beautiful, and may be summarized thus:—

Time is resolvable into Speech, as it is through Speech or the constant interchange of intelligence between men, as time runs on, that the truth is brought to light. But to Speech Veracity is essential, most especially in matters of opinion affecting character, that is, reputation, inasmuch as an honorable name is considered as the most valuable possession of man, and as such, awakens a desire which is one of the strongest of the human heart. This desire leads to the ordering of life on the highest plane as the means of obtaining Honor and Reputation, or in other words, it leads to the beautiful in conduct and sentiment, of which the highest type is the moral ideal and the imitation of this is the aim of life, viewed as an art.

The play is, therefore, cast into a sphere of life, of which the guiding principle is Honor, or the standard of the beautiful in character and action.

It should be noted, however, that opinions touching good name and reputation are necessarily inherent in human society, yet there are none on which men's minds are more widely divergent,

or which call more strongly for evidence and argument, as means of accusation and defense, of praise and blame ; and that these means, being reduced to rule, form the art of rhetoric.

The characters are drawn with great simplicity, Leontes being the only one at all complex and that only by reason of the shifting lights and shades of jealousy with which he is portrayed. Of this character, Mrs. Jameson remarks, "Leontes on slight grounds suspects his queen of infidelity with his friend Polyxenes, king of Bohemia ; the suspicion once admitted, and working in a jealous, passionate, and vindictive nature, *becomes a settled and confirmed opinion.*"

This touches the precise point which is here had in view. The domineering influence over the mind of an opinion or, it might be said, a *theory unsupported by evidence* is strikingly presented in the jealousy of Leontes. He affects to think himself dishonored in the point where men find dishonor most intolerable, yet his belief springs entirely from his imagination ; it is self-engendered and is the spontaneous outgrowth of a suspicious temperament. It seizes on his mind like a deadly infection and its ravages are like those of a virulent disease in a constitution predisposed to its attack. It quenches in him all generous feeling as well as all power of true perception. Like all theorists, he twists every circumstance, however irrelevant, into support of his theory. The innocent familiarities between his wife and his friend are to his distorted vision proofs of the grossest guilt ; a friendly clasp of the hand is a sign of illicit love. His mind at once swarms with fancies, which he takes for facts, and adduces as proofs ; nay, more, he argues because such things are possible and have occurred before and will occur again, his surmises must be true. He points to the flight of Polyxenes, whom he has marked for murder, as a sign of guilt and plumes himself upon his superior penetration.

"How bless'd am I

In my *just censure* ! in my *true opinion* !

Alack for *lesser knowledge* !

All 's true that is mistrusted."

Act II. Sc. 1.

These fancies he endeavors to impose upon his counselors and courtiers, and when they reject his imputations as grossly improbable, he claims for his empty suspicions all the force due to the evidence of the senses. He says : —

"You smell this business with a sense as cold  
As is a dead man's nose; but I do see 't and feel 't  
As you feel doing thus (touching Antigonus) and see withal  
The instruments that feel."

And, again, he points to the circumstantial evidence: —

"Camillo's flight

Added to their familiarity  
(Which was as gross as ever touch'd conjecture;  
That lack'd sight only, nought for approbation [proof]  
But only seeing, all other circumstances  
Made up to the deed) doth push on this proceeding."

Act II. Sc. 1.

He racks his invention for proofs of his dishonor and makes his own sense of shame and his dread of the opinion of others corroborating circumstances: —

"They are here with me already, whispering, sounding,  
Sicilia's a so-forth."

"Contempt and clamor

Will hiss me to the grave."

As he becomes debased he grows vindictive, and through the forms of a trial seeks Hermione's life, yet to give color to his proceedings he refers the truth of his charges to the oracle.

"Though I *am satisfied* and *need no more*  
Than *what I know*, yet shall the oracle  
Give rest to the minds of others," etc.

Act II. Sc. 1.

When the oracle, however, declares Hermione innocent, he does not hesitate to impeach its validity.

"*There is no truth at all in the oracle*;  
The sessions shall proceed: this is more falsehood."

Act III. Sc. 2.

So strong and so foreign to the love of truth is the tyranny of a favorite theory over the mind. As Bacon says: "The imagination becomes *infected*," and to such men their conclusions "seem probable and all but certain; to all men else incredible and vain." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 64.

Viewed as a poetic creation and piece of dramatic painting, it would be difficult to find anything more spirited and lifelike than the delineation of the working of Leontes' mind. The mean lies and innuendoes, the gross fancies, the self-torture and vindictive purposes, the rude manners and utter loss of dignity, the wretch and overthrow of his better nature are brought out with almost



frightful vividness ; but amid all this discord there mingles the undertone of a father's love. Mamillius, a boy of extraordinary promise, is doted on by his father, who sees in the resemblance the child bears to himself a *sign* of his legitimacy.

“What, hast smutch'd thy nose ?

They say it is a *copy out of mine* ;

Thou want'st the rough pash, and the shoots I have

To be *full like me* ; yet they say we are

Almost as *like as eggs* ; women say so

That will say anything,” etc.

Act I. Sc. 2.

Nothing less startling than the death of Mamillius, which comes in confirmation of the oracle, could bend the stubborn mind of the king to yield up his opinion and acknowledge his injustice. His penitence then becomes as entire as his wrong-doing had been absolute ; and notwithstanding his previous tyranny and the odium it has excited, his long years of sorrow and faithful memory and the high courtesy of his bearing prove him at heart “a graceful gentleman” and restore him to a place in our regard.

The groundless belief of Leontes in his wife's infidelity is entirely analogous with those baseless theories which Bacon enumerates among the chief obstacles of the discovery of truth, and which he sets down as necessary results of the ancient method of philosophizing, which permitted the mind, impatient of examining particulars, to fly at once to general conclusions, which it then assumes as indisputable principles, from which to argue and build up a system by “meditation and agitation of wit” (*vide* Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 19, 44, 62). In this process of the mind “the *first conclusion colors and brings into conformity with itself all that comes after.*” Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 46.

And thus with Leontes' theory of Hermione's guilt, it is almost entirely a creation of his own brain, having but one or two grossly misinterpreted facts to rest upon ; but having from these facts jumped to a conclusion, he will admit no possibility of error, but at once proceeds by logic and reasoning to wrest all other facts into conformity with it.

It may be observed that the fallacies and tendencies to error which infest the human mind and which Bacon distributes into four classes, denominated respectively idols of the tribe, of the cave, of the forum, and of the theatre, are sometimes divided by

very slight shades of difference, as in this case of Leontes' theory; the tenacity with which he holds to it is an "idol of the tribe," whereas the theory itself is more properly "an idol of the theatre."

Hermione, who adds to the dignity of the gentlewoman the majesty of the Queen, is a supreme representative of the most honored class. She is "*sovereignly honorable*." Notwithstanding her high place and her pride of character, she has a real humility of heart and impersonates a goodness that is proof against all the chances of Time. No vehemence nor violence clouds her intellect or ruffles her feelings. Subjected to indignities particularly galling to a queen and a lady, she has neither tears nor complaints, but feels "that *honorable* grief that burns worse than tears drown." In all her deportment there breathe a lofty dignity and self-respect; a consciousness that her wounded honor needs no defense but its own integrity, and she waits with patient fortitude for Time to vindicate her truth. She says:—

"Some ill planet reigns!  
I must be patient until the heavens look  
With an aspect more favorable."

Act II. Sc. 1.

This serenity is the measure of her force. Still she is far from silent under the accusations against her, but stands resolutely for her honor and that of her children.

"Behold me—  
A fellow of the royal bed, which owe  
A moiety of the throne, a great king's daughter  
The mother to a hopeful prince—here standing  
To prate and talk for life and honor 'fore  
Who please to come and hear. For life, I prize it  
As I weigh grief, which I would spare: *for honor*  
'*T is a derivative from me to mine*  
*And only that I stand for.*"

Act III. Sc. 2.

In words free from all excitement, she repels the charges of the king and points to her life in its whole tenor and integrity as an ample refutation of any surmises that would fasten shame on her name. In all her acts and words, she exhibits a greatness that rises above the storms of passion and the adverse chances of life. She is statuesque in her simple grandeur,—a grandeur free from all austerity; and like an antique ideal, in which a transcendent

beauty sets bounds to passion and pain, Hermione subordinates to dignity and grace the expression of the most poignant suffering and anguish.

Camillo is another character which gives dramatic form to a leading principle involved in the scheme of the piece, that is, the *giving of counsel* as one of the most important and honorable services that can be rendered between man and man. Camillo is a wise and trusted counselor. It is a proof of his integrity and skill in affairs that he has raised himself from an humble station to the highest dignity. "From meaner form, he has been bench'd and rais'd to worship." The king leans upon his wisdom and ability in both public and private business. When he first hears Leontes' charges against the queen, his quick sense of honor and his sympathy with his sovereign mistress lead him to tell the king that he "never spake what did *become him less*," and earnestly begs him to be cured of that "*diseased opinion*;" but upon finding his efforts useless, nay more, that he is expected to poison the good Polyxenes, he prudently yields or seems to yield to the tyrant's wishes and thus gains an opportunity to fly.

"I must

Forsake the court : to do 't or not, is certain  
To me a break-neck."

Reaching Bohemia, he becomes there the minister of affairs as he before had been in Sicilia. After the lapse of years, he longs to revisit his home, but Polyxenes entreats him to stay, and the tone of the entreaty throws light on his character.

"As thou lov'st me, Camillo, wipe not out the rest of thy services by leaving me now; *the need I have of thee thine own goodness hath made; better not to have had thee than thus to want thee; thou having made me businesses which none without thee can sufficiently manage, must either stay to execute them thyself or take away with thee the very services thou hast done,*" etc. Act IV. Sc. 1.

Wise and persuasive, Camillo may be considered an embodiment of that ability in "counsel or civil prudence" that underlies the action of the piece and everywhere (as will be seen) shows through the airy veil of poetry that envelops it.

Paulina's place in the picture is easily determined. In her is fully developed that sentiment of honor which accompanies a high standard of character, and which is shown in a quick sense of wrong whether offered to one's self or others. She fires with honest indignation at the dishonor done the Queen, and possess-



ing withal a high spirit and a hot temper and being moreover a lady preëminently endowed with the gift of speech, she resents the Queen's wrongs with a zeal and vehemence for which threats of the fagot and stake have no terrors. Her loud and angry scolding offsets the reticence and resignation of the Queen. Learning that her imprisoned mistress has become a mother, she offers, in the hope of softening the king, to carry to him the new-born babe, for

"The silence often of pure innocence  
Persuades when speaking fails."

At the same time she has no mind to trust to that influence alone, for she tells us:—

"I'll use that tongue I have; if wit flow from 't  
As boldness from my bosom, let it not be doubted  
I shall do good."

In pursuance of her undertaking, she forces her way past the guards and lays before the monarch the child, the sight of which, however, instead of moving his pity, inflames his jealousy to the highest pitch. But his violence and fury are no match for the noisy volubility with which she forces home to him her opinion of his conduct in terms that majesty is seldom permitted to hear. With a tongue as loud and incessant as the strokes of a flail, she berates the monarch and derides his threats until she is put by main force out of his presence.

Paulina is well aware of her terrible powers of speech, and has too much good sense to arouse them to activity, except upon due occasion. Like most honorable and hot-tempered people, she is as quick to forgive as she is to resent; consequently, when she sees that Leontes is penitent and touched to the heart, the same sense of right which has prompted her rebuke leads her to be as earnest in relieving his grief as before she had been in denouncing his tyranny, and at the conclusion of the play we are impressed rather with her goodness and amiability than otherwise.

Antigonus and the other lords of the court show no special points of character except in their high sense of honor, which leads them to uphold the Queen as an injured lady. They are examples of men forming their judgments by the rule of honor. They utterly reject the conclusions of the king as dishonorable to himself, and see in the Queen's irreproachable life a full proof of her innocence. They tell the King in answer to his charges:—

"If this be so  
We need no grave to bury honesty ;  
There's not a grain of it, the face to sweeten  
Of the whole earth."

Antigonus gives his life to preserve his oath inviolate and save the life of Perdita.

The boy Mamillius is a delightful sketch, in which the sentiment of honor is pushed to the extreme. So keen is his sense of honor that he sickens at the shame heaped upon his mother.

"He straight declin'd, droop'd, took it deeply,  
Fasten'd and fix'd the shame on't in himself,  
Threw off his spirits, his appetite, his sleep,  
And downright languish'd."

He dies of grief at the dishonor done his mother and reflected on himself, a circumstance which in the characteristic language of the piece is thus expressed :—

"His honorable thoughts  
(Thoughts high for one so tender) cleft the heart  
That could conceive a gross and foolish sire  
Blemish'd his gracious dam."

Act III. Sc. 2.

And here in passing may be noticed the exquisite finish of this play-writer as well as the rigor of his method, as exhibited in the mental traits of this character so slightly sketched ; for such traits are portrayed by touches taken from art and the standard of beauty, as thus :—

"Mamillius. I love you best.  
Lady. And why so, my lord ?  
Mam. Not for because  
Your brows are black ; yet black brows, they say,  
Become some women best : so that there be not  
Too much hair there, but in a semicircle  
Or in a half moon, made with a pen.  
Lady. Who taught you this ?  
Mam. I learn'd it out of women's faces."

Act II. Sc. 1.

Florizel, again, is a pattern of manly honor and graceful manners. His protestations of love are fine hyperboles, as fervent as elegant, and he relinquishes a kingdom for the sake of his truth.

The picture of his and Perdita's love is an ideal of trust and tenderness. As he says, "So turtles pair that never mean to part." It belongs to that enchanted land that lies along the sea-coast of Bohemia, where there is "an ampler ether, a diviner air ;"

where life is robed in brighter colors and has a richer humor; where truth and purity walk the earth in human form and delightful impossibilities are ordinary events.

This bewitching region is the dwelling-place of Perdita, who is the queen of it; for she is a representative of the poetical rather than the ethical side of "the fair and good," and a type of that beauty which it is the aim of Art to create. She is not merely an ideal; she represents the ideal. She is

"The most peerless piece of earth  
That e'er the sun shone bright on."

But it is her exquisite grace of mind, the indwelling spirit of this rare beauty, that gives her the poetical charm. In Hermione we see a moral beauty that springs from the grand and magnanimous virtues, but in Perdita, a sensible and intellectual grace that results from an instinctive decorum. In her first words she exhibits her exquisite sense of the becoming: —

"My gracious sir,  
To chide at your extremes it not becomes me :  
Oh, pardon, that I name them ; your high self  
The gracious mark of the land, you have obscur'd  
With a swain's wearing ; and me, poor lowly maid,  
Most goddess-like prank'd up. But that our feasts  
In every mess have folly, and the feeders  
Digest it with a custom, I should blush  
To see you so attir'd, sworn, I think,  
To show myself a glass."

Act IV. Sc. 3.

Like the other characters, Perdita is drawn with great simplicity. She has prominence only in a single scene, but that is one of exceeding beauty. As queen of the festival, she distributes among her guests flowers — themselves "bringing the swiftest thought of beauty" — and her sense of propriety is marked in her gracefully fitting the flowers of different seasons to the different ages of her guests. Polyxenes says to her: —

"Shepherdess,  
(A fair one are you) well you fit our ages  
With flowers of winter."

With like fitness, to men of middle age she gives flowers of midsummer, whilst to her younger friends she expresses her regret that she has no flowers of the spring suitable for them: —



“Now, my fairest friends,  
I would I had some flowers o' the spring, that might  
Become your time of day, and yours and yours,” etc.

But a fortunate compensation is made for this want, as it occasions the fine adjuration to Proserpina and the description, so full of classic grace and association, of the flowers the goddess let fall from Dis's wagon.

A striking similarity between Perdita's distribution of these flowers and Bacon's enumeration, in his Essay on Gardens, of the flowers belonging to different seasons, has frequently been pointed out. Yet the Essay was not published until several years after Shakespeare's death. As this similarity has a direct bearing on the purpose of this analysis, it will be here introduced.

The Essay runs thus: “In December, January, and the latter part of November, you must take such things as *are green all winter, . . . rosemary, . . . lavender, . . . marjoram.*”

Perdita says:—

“Reverend sirs,  
For you there's *rosemary* and *rue*: these keep  
*Seeming* and *savor all the winter long.*”

Again the Essay has: “The latter part of January and February, *primroses*; for *March*, there come *violets*, especially the single blue, the yellow *daffodil*; in April follow the double white *violets*, the *cowslip*, *flower-de-luce*, and *lilies of all natures*, the pale *daffodils.*”

“That which above all others yields *the sweetest smell* in the air is *the violet.*”

This passage in its poetic dress appears in the play as follows:

“ <i>Perdita.</i>	<i>Daffodils</i>
That come before the swallow dares, and take	
The winds of <i>March</i> with beauty: <i>violets dim</i> ,	
But <i>sweeter</i> than the lids of Juno's eyes,	
Or <i>Cytherea's breath</i> ; <i>pale primroses</i>	
. . . <i>bold oxlips</i> and	
The crown-imperial, <i>lilies of all kinds</i> ,	
The <i>flower-de-luce</i> being one.”	

The Essay continues: “In May and June come *pink*s of all sorts. The French *marigold*, *lavender* in flowers; in July come *gilliflowers* of all varieties.”

The poetic version in the play is as follows:—

"*Perdita.* Sir, the year growing ancient,  
 Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth  
 Of trembling winter — the fairest flowers of the season  
 Are our *carnations* and *streak'd gilliv'ors* :  
 Hot *lavender*, mint, savory, *marjoram* :  
 The *marigold*, . . . these are flowers  
 Of middle summer."

Act IV. Sc. 3.

There is another striking coincidence between a passage in the same scene and Bacon's views of art. In *The Intellectual Globe*, cap. ii., he thus discourses : —

"There has obtained a now inveterate mode of speaking and notion as if *Art were something different from Nature*, . . . and there has insinuated itself into men's minds a still subtler error, namely this, that Art is conceived to be a sort of *addition to Nature*, the proper effect of which is to *perfect what Nature has begun* or to *correct her* where she has *deviated*. . . . Whereas on the contrary there ought to be sunk deep that *things artificial* do not *differ from natural in form and essence*, but in *efficients* only ; that in reality man has no power over Nature except that of motion, namely, *to apply or remove natural bodies*, but Nature *performs all the rest within herself*."

This doctrine applied to the propagation and improvement of plants is thus expressed in verse : —

"Yet nature is made better by no mean,  
 But nature makes that mean ; so, over that art  
 Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art  
 That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry  
 A gentler scion to the wildest stock,  
 And make conceive a bark of baser kind  
 By bud of nobler race : this is an art  
 Which does mend nature ; change it rather ; but  
 The art itself is nature."

Act IV. Sc. 3.

It may be noted that these lines could not have been suggested to Shakespeare by the passage in *The Intellectual Globe*, as this latter work had not been published at the time of the production of the play.

In the translation of *The Advancement*, i. e., the *De Augmentis* (1623), Bacon gives a passage (*Book II. ch. i.*) similar to the one in *The Intellectual Globe*, but in *The Advancement* itself (1605) there is nothing that corresponds with it.

Perdita, though unschooled, is elegant. She lacks no instruction, "for she seems a mistress to most that teach." Her trust in her lover is measured by her own truth.

"By the *pattern* of her own thoughts, she *cuts out*  
The purity of his."

With all her simplicity, her clear mind pierces the forms of things and reaches their intrinsic truth. She sees that nature is a common heritage; that the sun and air are free to all; why then does not her truth give her a right to her princely lover, whose rank is but factitious? This inward dignity enables her to bear up against the threats of Polyxenes. In this there is a dramatic propriety, for though a shepherdess she is of royal lineage and her high blood gives her a dignity that befits the occasion. By this contrast, moreover, between her rustic condition, on the one hand, and her exalted beauty and innate dignity on the other, she is ingeniously made an exponent of the ideal in Art, which is the exaltation of forms and qualities to an imaginary perfection; thus raising an object above itself or above its ordinary level. So with Perdita —

"Nothing she does or seems  
But smacks of something greater than herself,  
Too noble for her place."

The enthusiastic praises of Doricles are also dramatically true as coming from a lover enraptured with his mistress.

"These your unusual weeds to each part of you  
Do give a life : *no shepherdess*, but *Flora*  
*Peering in April's front*."

Act IV. Sc. 3.

Yet this is something more than the idealizing of a mistress by a lover; it answers the requirements of the ideal itself by describing the rustic maiden as exalted to a goddess by the embellishments her natural beauty receives from the adornments of art.

The ideal, again, may be defined as "*the best*" that can be imagined of each thing in its kind, and stands above the ordinary forms of its class as a king or queen rises above the ignoble vulgar. Thus, in Florizel's eulogy of Perdita, all her accomplishments are carried to the highest degree.

"Each your doing  
So *singular*, in *each particular*



*Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds  
That all your acts are queens."*

Act IV. Sc. 3.

This notion of the ideal, which raises a common object by Art to a higher pitch of excellence, is humorously parodied by the Clown, who speaks of the wonderful beauty the pedler's singing imparts to his wares.

"Inkles, caddisses, cambrics, lawns ; why, he sings them over as they were *gods and goddesses* ; you would *think a smock were a she angel* ; he so *chants to the sleeve-hand* and the *work about the square on 't*."

A picture so bright with beauty must needs have some shadow ; and in the same group with Perdita is found the graceless rogue, Autolycus. With his songs, his humor, his impudence, his lies, he is the *beau idéal* of a cheat. He foils the fine sentiment of honor professed by the gentlemen of the piece. He is altogether of a practical turn and disdains speculative opinion. "For the life to come," he says, "I sleep out the thought on 't." Notwithstanding he flourished in the days of the Delphic oracle, he is of the modern school of philosophy and relies solely on the evidence of the senses. He says : —

"To have an *open ear*, a *quick eye*, and a *nimble hand* is necessary for a cut purse ; a *good nose* is requisite also to *smell out work* for the other senses."

He plies his vocation with indefatigable industry and enthusiasm.

"Every lane's end," he says, "every shop, church, session, hanging, yields a careful man work."

He is the staunchest of rogues ; he deems it disreputable to do an honest thing, is ashamed to tell the truth, and fears to do good lest it might not relish well among his other discredits. "Ha, ha," he exclaims, "what a fool honesty is ! and trust, his sworn brother, a very simple gentleman." His dread is that he may be struck from the roll of rogues and his name put in the book of virtue. His character is all of a piece. The only truth he tells is in self-defamation, when being disguised in the garments of a beggar, he cheats the Clown by accusing "Autolycus" of having put them upon him. "Let them call me rogue," he says, "for I am proof against that title and what shame else belongs to it."

The high honor and regard for truth which is the rule of life

with the other characters are set off by the unconscionable lies Autolycus tells to the crowd of rustics to whom he sells his ballads.

"Here's another ballad of a fish that appeared upon the coast on Wednesday, the four-score of April, forty thousand fathom above water, and sang this ballad against the hard hearts of maids : it was thought she was a woman and was turn'd into a cold fish. . . . The ballad is very pitiful and as true.

*Dor.* Is it true, think you ?

*Aut.* Five justices' hands to it and witnesses more than my pack will hold."

The Clown and other simpletons of both sexes who surround Perdita are foils to her decorum. Their mutual aspersions and coarse manners are manifest violations of the rules of grace and elegance. The Clown, for whose attentions Mopsa and Dorcas are ready to pull caps, assumes to act as "arbiter of elegance," and chides the jealous couple for their want of manners in whistling off before strangers the secrets of milking-time and kiln-hole.

From the foregoing analysis, it appears that *The Winter's Tale* is so constructed, particularly in the accusation and defense of Hermione, as to illustrate those errors into which men fall, when, in the absence of experience, they pass judgment on each other on the strength of testimony only, that is, opinions and reports which, as they are favorable or unfavorable, confer honor or shame ; and that in such cases (which particularly include the personages of poetry and fiction) the standard is "the good and fair," or the mind's ideal of that which is best and most beautiful in human character ; comprising as well the grand and heroic virtues that confer dignity as exemplified in Hermione as the lighter graces and proprieties that confer beauty, in which Perdita excels ; and that all the characters except Autolycus and Leontes (temporarily) recognize this standard in their regard for veracity, good name, and the sentiment of honor. Of this sentiment and of the readiness it inspires to defend others when unjustly attacked, Paulina is a marked instance, while Autolycus, who glories in being a rogue, relieves all this refinement and punctilio by his shameless effrontery and dishonesty. But all the varied *dramatis personæ* from high to low are but different branches from the same stock and stand in harmonious conjunction as parts of one whole. It is this moral unity, this unity of impression and effect, which enables the dramatist to pair together two distinct actions ; such as the trial of Hermione and the festi-

val of Perdita, for Hermione is an ideal of honesty or goodness and Perdita one of decorum or beauty; but goodness and beauty in the moral world are essentially the same; they are but different aspects of truth which is one or unity itself; so that like the pair of friends spoken of in the play, who, though dissevered, "yet shake hands as over" a vast and embrace as it were from the ends of opposed winds," this pair of actions is linked and united in one whole by their moral identity, being one in spirit and sentiment as well as one in "*discovery*" and *catastrophe*. By the identity, moreover, of goodness and beauty, the moral and artistic designs of the piece are most intimately blended; on the one side, the piece being a representation of life in which men pass judgment upon the goodness of others, where the idea of goodness is necessarily assumed as the rule, while on the other side it is a picture which exemplifies the principles of imitative art by viewing life itself as an art, of which beauty is the rule.

It is these features in the composition of *The Winter's Tale* that render it a suggestive study to those who seek a knowledge of the artistic method of the Shakespearian drama.

*The Winter's Tale* is a counterpart and companion piece of *Cymbeline*, and bears the same relation to it that Poetry does to History.

In *Cymbeline*, the intercourse of life is represented as an exchange of services; so likewise is it in *The Winter's Tale*. But services, though aiming generally at utility, are often rendered for the sake of the pleasure they impart and for the gracefulness of bestowing them. Men testify their fellow-feeling and sense of brotherhood by practical help and needful service, but they honor each other by elegant hospitalities and the interchange of compliments and courtesies. And thus in the fable of this play, two kings who have been friends from youth lay aside their cares of state and reciprocate visits and festivities. They meet as friends, not as monarchs, and we see little or nothing of their political character. So, likewise, with the sheep-shearing feast, all is mirth and pastime. Yet into this picture, thus discharged of all prosaic and practical matters, the poet with his usual subtlety insinuates the principles of "civil prudence" that govern the transactions of men; for these happy reunions and intercourse are suddenly changed by circumstances to division and discord which fill the action and dialogue with serious business requiring



great wisdom to manage; and this gives opportunity for illustrations of the doctrines of Civil Knowledge (which conform to those laid down by Bacon) and develops also the habit of mind of the characters in their use of the *deductive method* in forming conclusions and judgments; since, according to Bacon, in *civil matters and sciences founded on dogma and opinion*, the use of *deductive logic is good*.

In the *De Augmentis*, the nature of civil knowledge is thus stated:—

“Civil Knowledge has three parts according to the three summary actions of Society: the knowledge of *Conversation*, the knowledge of *Business*, and knowledge of *Government* . . . and thus there are three wisdoms of divers natures, which are often separate, Wisdom of *Behaviour*, Wisdom of *Business*, and Wisdom of *State*.” De Aug. Book VIII. ch. i.

This last may be passed at once, as with regard to it Bacon imposes silence upon himself, apparently deeming it improper to reveal the mysteries and secrets of State; wherefore, although there are frequent hints in the play of the practices of princes with respect to the spreading of rumors, proclamations, and the use of secret agencies and *espionage*, it is impossible to say whether these are among the arts of which Bacon would have discoursed, had he written upon the subject.

As for the “Wisdom of Behaviour,” it is abundantly exemplified and needs but a brief comment. It includes all the arts of decorum and urbanity. On this head, Bacon remarks: “The Wisdom of Conversation ought certainly not to be over much affected, but much less despised, for a wise management thereof has not only a grace and honour in itself, but an important influence in business and government. For *look what an effect is produced by the countenance and the carriage of it*. Well says the poet, —

“Contradict not your words by your look,

For a man may *destroy and betray the force of his words by his countenance, nay, and the effect of his deeds also*.” De Aug. Book VIII. ch. i.

This is the point of Camillo’s advice to Leontes, who had urged the poisoning of Polyxenes, and had promised after his removal to take the Queen again for policy’s sake and to prevent scandal. Camillo tells him:—

"Go, then, and with a *countenance as clear*  
*As friendship wears at feasts, keep with Bohemia*  
*And with your queen. I am his cup bearer,"* etc.

Act I. Sc. 2.

But how little Leontes' jealousy suffered him to heed this admonition and how quickly he betrayed himself are learned from the remarks of Polyxenes, who thus describes the change in the king's looks and manner :—

"*Pol.* The king hath on him *such a countenance*  
*As he had lost some province and a region*  
*Loved as he loves himself: even now I met him*  
*With customary compliment, when he*  
*Wafting his eyes to the contrary, and falling*  
*A lip of much contempt, speeds from me; and*  
*So leaves me to consider what is breeding*  
*That changes thus his manners."*

Act I. Sc. 2.

Bacon sums up the art of decorum in these words : "*All grace and dignity of behaviour may be summed up in the even balancing of our own dignity and that of others.*" De Aug. Book VIII. ch. i.

The spirit of this rule is perfectly exemplified by Perdita, the ideal of decorum, whose conscious worth invests her with a self-sustaining dignity when she is denounced by the king for presuming to love "the Sceptre's heir." She says :—

"*Per.* I was not much *afear'd*: for once or twice  
*I was about to speak; and tell him plainly*  
*The self-same sun that shines upon his court*  
*Hides not his visage from our cottage, but*  
*Looks on alike. Will't please you, sir, be gone? [To FLORIZEL]*  
*I told you what would come of this: Beseech you—*  
*Of your own state take care: this dream of mine*  
*Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch further,*  
*But milk my ewes and weep."*

Act IV. Sc. 3.

Thus Perdita balances her respect for herself with her respect for others, which is an exact fulfillment of the rule of decorum.

The branch of civil knowledge, however, which in the play receives the most copious exemplifications is "The Wisdom of Business" or the Art of Negotiation: of this Bacon says :—

"The Doctrine concerning negotiation is divided into the *doctrine concerning scattered occasions* and the *doctrine concerning advancement in life.*

"The first comprises all *the possible variety of business* . . . neither is there any reason to fear that the matter of this knowledge should be so variable that it falls not under precept; for it is much less infinite than the science of government, which yet we find very well cultivated. Of this kind of wisdom, it seems some of the ancient Romans in their best times were professors; for Cicero reports that a little before his age the senators who had most name and opinion for wisdom and practice in affairs (as Coruncanianus, Curius, Laelius, etc.) used to walk in the forum at certain hours, where they might give audience to their fellow-citizens, who would consult with them not merely upon law but *upon business of all kinds, as the marriage of a daughter, the education of a son, the purchase of a farm, and every other occasion incidental to a man's life.* Whence it appears that there is a *wisdom of counsel and advice* even in private causes arising out of an universal insight and experience in the affairs of the world which is used, indeed, upon particular causes but is gathered by general observation of causes of a like nature." De Aug. Book VIII. ch. ii.

This "wisdom of counsel," then, so far from being confined to the more important emergencies of life, is applicable to all occasions and affairs where advice is asked or given, or even persuasion attempted. To counsel and to persuade have similar aims; all who counsel wish to persuade, and all who persuade affect to give good counsel. Therefore these two notions *counsel* and *persuasion*, thus intimately allied (the latter under the various forms of entreaty, prayer, beseeching, exhortation, petition, and other modes of inducing men to assent to opinions or to some course of action) pervade every scene of the play. And as this is an important feature in its structure it may be worth while to run rapidly through the leading scenes.

In the opening of the play, Leontes and the queen entreat Polyxenes to prolong his visit; Leontes endeavors to persuade Camillo of the queen's guilt and urges him to poison Polyxenes; next follow the entreaties of Polyxenes that Camillo disclose what danger is approaching him, and Camillo in turn counseling Polyxenes to fly; after Hermione has been sent to prison, Antigonus and the other lords attempt to persuade the king to recall the queen, while he, on the other hand, seeks to prove to them the queen's guilt; then follows the scene with Paulina, who professes



herself the king's "most obedient counselor" and brings in the babe, for

"The silence of pure innocence  
Persuades when speaking fails."

The king orders the child to be put to death and the courtiers beg him on their knees to change his purpose; the defense of Hermione on her trial is, of course, an attempt to persuade; Paulina by protestation endeavors to win belief for her assurance that the queen is dead, in the course of which she uses the following fine hyperbole drawn from *prayer*:—

"A thousand knees  
Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,  
Upon a barren mountain, and still winter  
In storm perpetual, could not move the gods  
To look that way thou wert."

At the opening of the fourth act, Polyxenes entreats Camillo to remain at his court; in the next scene, Autolycus begs assistance of the Clown; then come the protestations of Florizel; then the advice of Polyxenes to Florizel that he acquaint his father with his design to marry; next follows the counsel of Camillo to Florizel to fly to Sicily, etc.

The fifth act presents like instances; and the foregoing list omits altogether the oaths, adjurations, and other similar means of winning assent and belief that may be met with on every page.

All the important situations of the play are marked by the seeking and giving of counsel. Leontes consults Camillo respecting the alleged dishonor of the queen; Camillo advises him most strenuously to drop his suspicions or at least to conceal his feelings. Leontes accedes:—

"Thou dost *advise* me  
Even so as I mine own course have set down,  
I will seem friendly as thou *hast advised*."

Polyxenes consults Camillo on occasion of the change in the king's demeanor; Camillo advises him to fly:—

"Therefore *mark my counsel*,  
Which must be even as swiftly followed as  
I mean to utter it."

Leontes denounces the queen to the gentlemen of the court; they, on the other hand, counsel him to dismiss his charges:—

"*It is for you we speak, not for ourselves ;  
You are abus'd and by some putter-on,*" etc.

But he angrily rejects their advice : —

" Why, what need we  
*Commune with you of this, but rather follow  
Our forceful instigation ? our prerogative  
Calls not your counsels,*" etc.

To give a color to his action, however, he affects to ask counsel of the oracle : —

" Now from the oracle  
They will bring all ; whose *spiritual counsel* had  
Shall stop or spur me."

And to pass other instances, the counsel given by Camillo to Prince Florizel on the occasion of his flying from home in order to marry a shepherdess, is a pointed example of one of those particular emergencies, and of that kind of civil prudence of which Bacon speaks, as a part of civil knowledge ; and is a fair, full, and apposite illustration of his doctrine. As the passage is also used as an example of oratory, it will be quoted further on, when rhetoric as a topic of the piece is treated of.

It is evident that the notions of counsel, advice, persuasion, entreaty, etc., run through the piece, and that the incidents and dialogue are so constructed as to serve as illustrations of that doctrine termed by Bacon "*Wisdom of Counsel and Advice,*" or, "*the doctrine of scattered occasions.*"

The art of persuasion is Rhetoric ; and inasmuch as counsel and persuasion pervade the play, the dramatist skillfully wraps up in the dialogue examples of the chief points in the Art of Rhetoric. All men are rhetoricians ; every man attempts to persuade or dissuade, accuse or excuse, praise or blame, and the Art of Rhetoric is simply the best method of doing these things. It may, therefore, be contended that any play or writing will furnish examples of the art, and unquestionably this is the case, but such examples would be casual only ; whereas in the play the instances are of special technicalities, and cover moreover the principal points of the art ; besides the plot is constructed in a way to call for the use of rhetoric in accusation, defense, persuasion, and praise, and therefore it is fair to infer that the examples given are not merely the use of the art by the speakers for their own purposes, but intended also by the poet for illustration of the art itself.

Under Bacon's classification, Rhetoric is a part of the "Art of Transmission or Delivery" and is called by him the doctrine of "*the ornament of speech*," the end of which he describes as being "*to fill the imagination with such observations and images as may assist reason*" in coming to a conclusion. Rhetoric includes also "*the invention of arguments*," and is the practical application of arguments so invented.

Bacon is brief upon the art of rhetoric, finding but few deficiencies in it. He speaks of its having been specially cultivated by the ancients, particularly by Aristotle, whose treatise on the subject remains to this day unsurpassed. Bacon was well acquainted with it, and although he points out some omissions in it, he calls it "the best book of the best author." It will be cited here, not because it is supposed that the poet had it before him when he wrote — for he himself is one of the most skillful rhetoricians that ever lived — but because its profound analysis of the subject may be used to show how aptly passages of the play exemplify principles of the rhetorical art, and this will answer the purpose of this analysis.

Aristotle defines rhetoric as "a faculty of considering all the possible means of persuasion on every subject."

There are three kinds of orations, the *judicial*, the *deliberative*, and the *demonstrative*.

The business of the judicial orator is *accusation* or *defense*; his object, *justice* or *injustice*, and his *proofs* are drawn from *common opinions* concerning the just or unjust." Aris. Rhet. Book I. ch. iii.

A specimen of judicial oratory is the speech of the Queen in her own defense. The scene is a court of justice, and Hermione is arraigned for treason. Both the charge and the denial are unsupported by testimony. In such cases, where aspersions are thrown upon character, Aristotle points out that they are to be met: —

1. By contradiction.
2. By extenuation and excuse.
3. By pointing to previous good character.
4. By exciting the favorable regard of the hearer for one's self, and the reverse for the adversary. Aris. Rhet. Book III. ch. xv. §§ 2, 3, xvii. § 12.

All these points are met in Hermione's defense.



First, she directly contradicts the charge : —

“ Since what I am to say must be but that  
Which *contradicts my accusation* ; and  
The testimony on my part no other  
But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me  
To say ‘ *Not guilty* : ’ *mine integrity*  
*Being counted falsehood shall, as I express it,*  
*Be so receiv’d.* But thus, *if powers divine*  
*Behold our human actions* (as they do)  
I doubt not then, but *innocence shall make*  
*False accusation blush and tyranny*  
*Tremble at patience.*”

Act III. Sc. 2.

She next points to her “ previous good character ” and boldly appeals to the conscience of the king : —

“ You, my lord, best know  
(Who least will seem to do so) *my past life*  
*Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,*  
As I am now unhappy,” etc.

“ *I appeal*  
*To your own conscience, sir, before Polyxenes*  
*Came to your court, how I was in your grace,*  
*How merited to be so,*” etc.

She then “ extenuates and excuses ” any intimacy with Polyxenes : —

“ For Polyxenes  
(With whom I am accused) *I do confess*  
*I lov’d him as in honor he requir’d,*  
*With such a kind of love as might become*  
*A lady like me ; with a love, even such*  
*So and no other, as yourself commanded,*” etc.

And lastly, by an *exact and orderly* narration of the grievous and unmerited wrongs that had been heaped upon her, she excites *pity for herself and indignation against her accuser.*

“ Sir, spare your threats ;  
To me can life be no commodity :  
*The crown and comfort of my life, your favor*  
I do give lost ; for I do feel it gone ;  
But know not how it went : *My dearest joy*  
*And first-fruits of my body, from his presence*  
I am barr’d like one infectious : *My third comfort*  
*Starr’d most unluckily is from my breast,*  
*The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth*  
*Hal’d out to murder,*” etc.

The speech is too long to quote in full ; it should be read with an eye to its merits as a piece of judicial oratory, which the situation itself shows it to be, and it will then be seen that the most practiced rhetorician could not state the case with more force and technical skill than it is here put.

Of the second species of oratory above named, that is, the *deliberative*, “the business is partly *persuasion*, partly *dissuasion*, for invariably those who in *their individual capacities* advise and those who *publicly harangue*, effect one of these objects.

The object of the deliberative orator is the *expedient* or *inexpedient*, and his proofs are drawn from *common opinions* concerning *good* and *evil*.” Aris. Rhet. Book I. ch. iii.

All counsel and advice (of which we have seen the prevalence in this play) fall under this head ; and an example of deliberative oratory, perfect in all essential parts (the rules for which are of course the same whether it be addressed to an individual or a multitude) is furnished by the counsel given by Camillo to Florizel to sail for Sicily. This passage has been previously mentioned as an example of Bacon’s doctrine of “the wisdom of scattered occasions,” or “wise conduct in particular emergencies.”

In the drama, a specimen of oratory must be broken up more or less into dialogue ; but this has the advantage of showing the effect the speaker makes upon the mind of the auditor. What is looked for here is the technical skill which renders the passage an example of certain rhetorical principles.

The first point in deliberative oratory is to gain the favor of the person addressed. Aris. Rhet. Book II. ch. i. § 3.

There are three causes independently of the proof adduced of a speaker’s deserving belief, viz., ability, integrity, and good-will. Aris. Rhet. Book II. ch. i. § 5.

Camillo, therefore, first seeks to give Florizel the impression that he is his friend and an able and honest one. He begins : —

“ Sir, I think

You have *heard of my poor services i’ the love*  
That I have borne your father ?

Flor.

Very nobly

Have you *deserv’d* : it is my father’s music  
To speak your deeds ; not little of his care  
To have them *recompens’d* as *thought on*.

Cam.

Well, my lord,

If you may please to think, I *love the king*  
 And *through him what is nearest to him*, which is  
*Your gracious self.*

Act. IV. Sc. 3.

Thus having laid a foundation for being considered by Florizel as a friend and a man of ability, and as having his interest at heart, Camillo goes on to inspire still greater confidence by promising to effect all the prince's wishes.

"Embrace but my direction,  
 (If your more ponderous and settled project  
 May suffer alteration,) on mine honor  
 I'll point you where you shall have such receiving  
 As shall become your highness ; where you may  
 Enjoy your mistress (from the whom, I see  
 There's no disjunction to be made, but by,  
 As heavens forefend ! your ruin :) marry her ;  
 And (with my best endeavors, in your absence)  
 Your discontenting father strive to qualify,  
 And bring him up to liking."

Camillo, now having gained the full confidence of his hearer, as the short speech of the Prince indicates,

(How, Camillo,  
 May this, almost a miracle, be done ?  
 That I may call thee something more than man,  
 And, after that, trust to thee, —)

reveals his plan, in favor of which he *enlists the imagination* of his hearer by portraying in vivid colors the happy results that will follow its adoption.

"Then list to me :  
 This follows, — if you will not change your purpose,  
 But undergo this flight, make for Sicilia ;  
 And there present yourself and your fair princess,  
 (For so I see she must be,) 'fore Leontes ;  
 She shall be habited as becomes  
 The partner of your bed. *Methinks, I see*  
*Leontes, opening his free arms, and weeping*  
*His welcomes forth ; asks thee, the son, forgiveness,*  
*As 't were in the father's person, kisses the hands*  
*Of your fresh princess ; o'er and o'er divides him*  
*'Twixt his unkindness and his kindness ; the one*  
*He chides to hell, and bids the other grow,*  
*Faster than thought, or time."*

Having thus "filled the imagination of his hearer with an



image" of "the good" that would accrue from his plan, Camillo goes on to point out its feasibility in detail, and in answer to Florizel's inquiry what color for the visitation he should hold up, replies :—

"Sent by the king, your father,  
To greet him, and to give him comforts. Sir,  
The manner of your bearing towards him, with  
What you, as from your father, shall deliver,  
Things known betwixt us three, I'll write you down :  
The which shall point you forth at every sitting  
What you must say ; that he shall not perceive  
But that you have your father's bosom there  
And speak his very heart."

The "expediency" of his plan being thus shown, and "the good" that must flow from it, Camillo next *dissuades* Florizel from his own course by painting in equally strong colors "the evil" that is sure to attend it.

"A course more promising  
Than a wild dedication of yourselves  
To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores, most certain  
To miseries enough : no hope to help you,  
But, as you shake off one, to take another :  
Nothing so certain as your anchors ; who  
Do their best office, if they can but stay you  
Where you'll be loath to be."

He concludes by adding a maxim in the nature of an argument (Aris. Rhet. Book III. ch. xvii. § 17) calculated to move strongly the feelings of his hearer and force his assent.

"Besides you know,  
Prosperity's the very bond of love,  
Whose fresh complexion and whose heart together  
Affliction alters."

Act. IV. Sc. 3.

It is clear that in this piece of "deliberative," Camillo follows the most approved rules of rhetoric.

The business of *demonstrative* rhetoric is *praise* or *blame* ; its object is *honor* or *disgrace*, and its *proofs* are drawn from the common opinions concerning the *honorable* and *dishonorable*. Aris. Rhet. Book I. ch. iii.

Of *demonstratives*, the play furnishes two pointed examples, one of praise, the other of dispraise. These are necessarily brief,

the poet giving in a condensed form (as in other parts of his work) the spirit and sentiment of the thing imitated. It must, moreover, be borne in mind that rhetorical rules are applicable to all speech, and are not confined to set harangues.

In praising, the speaker must avail himself of *amplification* in many cases.

"Amplification," says Aristotle, "falls in easily with demonstrative oratory; for its essence is its being above mediocrity. On which account we should make a comparison with the generality of men, if we cannot with men of character; since the *being above the average seems to indicate virtue*. In a word, of all the formulæ common to each branch of rhetoric, amplification best suits demonstrative, for the orator takes *the actions for granted* and it thus remains only to *invest them with greatness and beauty*." Book I. ch. ix. § 39.

The dramatist goes one step further than this rule, for he compares the actions of his subject, not with those of others but with each other, all being supremely excellent, yet the last still considered the best. It is the eulogy of Perdita by Florizel.

"What you do  
*Still betters what is done.* When you speak, sweet,  
 I'd have you do it ever; when you sing  
 I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms,  
 Pray so; and, for the ordering of your affairs,  
 To sing them too; when you do dance, I wish you  
 A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do  
 Nothing but that, move still, still so, and own  
 No other function; *each your doing,*  
*So singular in each particular,*  
*Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds*  
*That all your acts are queens."*

Act IV. Sc. 3.

Dramatically considered, this is the fond admiration of an ardent young lover; rhetorically, it is a specimen of *demonstrative* speech, and poetically, it is the description of an ideal, which by reason of its superlative excellence, as has already been noted, stands among the ordinary forms of its kind, as a king or queen stands among the common populace.

Another demonstrative, in this case of dispraise, is Paulina's denunciation of the king after the apparent death of Hermione. It takes the form of a climax.

“Thy tyranny

Together working with thy jealousies,  
 Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle  
 For girls of nine ! O, think what they have done,  
 And then run mad indeed ; stark mad ! for all  
 Thy by-gone fooleries were but spices of it.  
 That thou betray'dst Polyxenes, *'t was nothing* ;  
 That did but show thee, of a fool, inconstant,  
 And damnable ungrateful ; nor *was 't much*  
 Thou wouldst have poisoned good Camillo's honor,  
 To have him kill a king ; poor trespasses,  
*More monstrous standing by* ; whereof I reckon  
 The casting forth to crows thy baby daughter,  
*To be or none, or little* ; though a devil  
 Would have shed water out of fire, ere done 't :  
*Nor is it directly laid to thee, the death*  
*Of the young prince*, whose honorable thoughts  
 (Thoughts high for one so tender) cleft the heart  
 That could conceive a gross and foolish sire  
 Blemish'd his gracious dam : *this is not, no,*  
*Laid to thy answer* : But the last, — O lords,  
 When I have said, *cry woe ! the queen, the queen,*  
*The sweet'st, dear'st creature's dead* ; and *vengeance* for 't  
 Not dropp'd down yet.”

Act III. Sc. 2.

Dramatically, this passage is characteristic of the zealous, high-tempered Paulina, while as a *demonstrative*, it lifts one particular misdeed into special singularity and prominence by the exclusion of all others, however heinous, as greatly inferior.

Proofs are in Rhetoric either *Examples* or *Enthymemes*<sup>1</sup> as in Logic, Induction, or Syllogism, for an Example is a short Induction, and an Enthymeme a short syllogism. Aris. Rhet. Book I. ch. ii.

Enthymemes are adduced from *probabilities* and *signs*, so that by enthymemes and examples all speeches effect their demonstrative proofs, and in no other way whatever. Book I. ch. ii. §§ 8, 14.

Of an argument derived from *signs*, Leontes frames for us an example : —

“Is whispering nothing ?

Is leaning cheek to cheek ? is meeting noses ?

<sup>1</sup> Enthymeme. For those who may not be familiar with this scholastic term, it may be noted that an enthymeme is a rhetorical syllogism, or one of which for the sake of brevity one of the premises is suppressed.



Kissing with inside lip ? stopping the career  
 Of laughter with a sigh ? (a note infallible  
 Of breaking honesty) — horsing foot on foot ?  
 Skulking in corners ? wishing clocks more swift ?  
 Hours, minutes ? noon, midnight ? and all eyes blind  
 With the pin and web, but theirs, theirs only  
 That would unseen be wicked ? *is this nothing ?*  
 Why then the world and all that 's in 't is nothing ;  
 The covering sky is nothing ; Bohemia 's nothing,  
 My wife is nothing, nor nothing have these nothings  
*If this be nothing."*

Act I. Sc. 2.

*Examples*, used as arguments, may be either of fact or invented. Of the latter there are two species, *illustration* and *fable*. Book II. ch. xx.

Leontes, after pointing to the flight of Camillo and Polyxenes as a proof of the truth of his suspicions, strengthens his case with an "illustration" descriptive of the effect upon him of finding his opinion thus verified.

"There may be in the cup  
 A spider steep'd, and one may drink, depart,  
 And yet partake no venom ; for his knowledge  
 Is not infected : but if one present  
 Th' abhorr'd ingredient to his eye, make known  
 How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,  
 With violent hefts ; *I have drunk and seen the spider."*

Act II. Sc. 1.

Among proofs that originate independently of art such as Witness, Deeds, Oaths, and others, Aristotle also mentions *proverbs* on the ground that they are decisions of men of prudence, and attest the experience of mankind. Book I. ch. xv.

The dramatist also introduces a proverb by way of proof and couples it with the resemblance of a child to the father as a *sign* of legitimacy : —

"Leontes. This brat is none of mine,  
 It is the issue of Polyxenes.  
 Paulina. It is yours ;  
 And might we lay the old proverb to your charge  
*So like you, 't is the worse.* Behold, my lords,  
 Although the print be little, *the whole matter*  
*And copy of the father ;* eye, nose, lip,  
 The trick of his frown, his forehead, nay, the valley,  
 The pretty dimple of his chin and cheek ; his smiles,

The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger ;  
 And thou, good goddess Nature, which hath made it  
 So like to him that got it," etc.

Act II. Sc. 3.

One purpose of this analysis being to decide, if possible, whether the Art of Rhetoric is casually or intentionally exemplified in the piece, the illustrations are carried to a greater length than they otherwise would be. The more special and technical such illustrations are, the stronger, of course, the inference that they are not casual.

To quote again from Aristotle: "The principles of Rhetoric out of which *enthymemes* are to be drawn are the *common opinions* that men have concerning expedient and inexpedient, just and unjust, honourable and dishonourable, for as in Logic where certain and infallible knowledge is the scope of our proof, so in *rhetoric* the *principles* must be *common opinions*."

"And because nothing is expedient, inexpedient, just, unjust, honourable, or dishonourable but *what has been done or is to be done*, and *nothing is to be done that is not possible*, it is necessary that the speaker have propositions on the subject of *possibility* and *impossibility* and on the question whether a fact *has or has not happened, will or will not take place*." Book I. ch. iii. § 8.

Of enthymemes drawn from these fundamental and preliminary topics, Leontes treats us to examples in his soliloquies in which he attempts to reason himself into a belief of his own suspicions.

And first as to the possibility of the fact : —

"Affection, thy intention stabs the centre :  
 Thou dost make possible things not so held,  
 Communicat'st with dreams —  
 With what's unreal thou co-active art  
 And follow'st nothing. Then 't is *very credent*  
 Thou may'st co-join with something ; and thou dost,  
 And that to the infection of my brains," etc.

Act I. Sc. 2.

On the question whether such a fact as he suspects *has or has not ever taken place, will or will not ever be done*, he thus supports his surmises : —

"There have been,  
 Or I am much deceiv'd, cuckolds ere now ;  
 And many a man there is even at this present, etc.  
 . . . Nay, there's comfort in 't

Whiles other men have gates and those gates opened  
 As mine, against their will. Should all despair  
 That have revolted wives, the tenth of mankind  
 Would hang themselves, etc.

*Be it concluded*

No barricado," etc.

Act I. Sc. 2.

"The difference of enthymemes," says Aristotle, "is considerable, some being *general* or applicable to *all subjects* alike; others *special* or peculiar to *certain arts and faculties*. The first or *general forms* of arguments are called *topics* or *places* or *elements*." Book I. ch. ii. § 20, 21; Book II. ch. xxii.

These *topics* answer to that subdivision of the Art of Invention which Bacon terms "*the invention of arguments*."

"Topical invention," he says, "is *general* or particular. The *general* is so *diligently treated in the common logic that we need not dwell upon it*." De Aug. Book V. ch. iii.

He therefore gives no examples; but these topics or general forms of argument applicable alike to all subjects are necessarily the same in all treatises of rhetoric, and therefore for the explanation of the numerous instances of them which the play contains and which renders it copiously illustrative of "*the invention of arguments*," Aristotle's work will be cited.

For instance: "One element of enthymemes is derivable from *contraries*, for we should consider whether the contrary quality be inherent in the contrary subject, doing away the argument grounded thereon; and if it be inherent, founding one thereon ourselves; as it is in the Messenian oration." If *war* be the *cause* of our present troubles, of course we shall *put ourselves right* with the return of peace. Book II. ch. xxiii. § 1.

Leontes reasons precisely in the same way:—

"Nor night nor day, no rest: it is but weakness  
 To bear the matter thus; mere weakness, if  
 The *cause* were not in being; *part of the cause*  
 She, the adulteress . . .

Say, *she were gone*,  
 Given to the fire, a moiety of my rest  
 Might come to me again."

Act II. Sc. 2.

Another element is derived from relatives:—

"If to *command* be just, so is the having *executed the command*." Book II. ch. xxiii. § 3.



This form of argument is used by Hermione in reply to Leontes' charge of her having loved Polyxenes : —

“A love, even such,  
So and no other as *yourself* commanded :  
Which *not to have done*, I think, had been in me  
Both *disobedience* and *ingratitude*  
To you and toward your friend.”

Act III. Sc. 2.

Another element is derivable from the relations of *greater* and *less*, or the argument *a fortiori*, for instance. “If not even the *gods* know everything, hardly, I should suppose, do *men*,” for it is to say that if the quality be not inherent in that which would *more naturally* possess it, then is it evident that in that which would *less naturally* possess it, it is not inherent. Book II. ch. xxiii. § 4.

This is the same form of argument as that which would prove that an action, which is not expedient though supported by examples, is still less expedient when supported by none, as in the following : —

“If I could find example  
Of thousands that had struck anointed kings  
And flourish'd after, I'd not do it ; but since  
Nor brass nor stone nor parchment bears not one,  
Let villainy itself forswear 't.”

Act I. Sc. 2.

And the argument *a minori*, that “he assaults his neighbour, who even does so to his father,” is derived from the element, if the *less probability* exist so does also the *greater*.

This is the argument used by Leontes, when after enumerating the signs of love between the Queen and Polyxenes, he asks : —

“Is this nothing ?  
Why, then, *the world and all that's in 't* is nothing,” etc.

Act I. Sc. 4.

And again, by *parity of reasoning*, where it is said, “And is thy father to be pitied in that he has lost his children and is not in truth Æneas who has lost his noble offspring?”

This element gives form to an argument of Polyxenes : —

“Reason my son  
Should choose himself a wife ; but as good reason  
The father (all whose joy is nothing else  
But fair posterity) should hold some counsel  
In such a business.”

Act IV. Sc. 3

Another element is deduced from assertions made respecting yourself retorted upon your adversary. Book II. ch. xxiii. § 7.

Thus Paulina answers the king: —

*“Leontes. A nest of traitors !*  
*Antigonus. I am none by this good light.*  
*Paulina. Nor I, nor any*  
*But one that’s here, and that’s himself, for he*  
*The sacred honor of himself, his queen’s,*  
*His hopeful son’s, his babe’s, betrays to slander,*  
*Whose sting is sharper than the sword’s,” etc.*

Act II, Sc. 3.

Another *place* is from *definition*, in which form of argument inferences are deduced, after having defined and ascertained the question." Book II. ch. xxiii. § 8.

*“Leontes.* I'll have thee burn'd.  
*Paulina.* I care not ;  
 It is an heretic that makes the fire,  
 Not she which burns in it. I'll not call you tyrant ;  
 But this most cruel usage of your queen,  
 (Not able to produce more accusation  
 Than your own weak-hing'd fancy), something savors  
 Of tyranny and will ignoble make you,  
 Yea, scandalous to the world.”

Act II. Sc. 3.

Another element is deducible from *the number of senses* in which a word may be taken. Book II. ch. xxiii. § 9.

Of this, the Clown gives a comic instance:—

"*Clown.* There's no other way but to tell the king she's a changeling and none of your flesh and blood. She being none of your flesh and blood, your flesh and blood has not offended the king; and so, your flesh and blood is not to be punished by him." Act IV. Sc. 3.

Another element is derivable from a *former* decision of the same or similar question, especially if the wise or good so decide, or those contrary to whom it is not becoming to decide; for instance, a god or father or teacher, happen so to have decided. Book II. ch. xxiii. § 12.

The question in the play is whether Leontes, notwithstanding the prediction of the oracle, ought to marry again for the sake of leaving an heir to the throne. Paulina thus replies to the argument of the lords :—

My lord should to the heavens be contrary ;

Oppose against their wills. [To LEONTES.] *Care not for issue ;*  
 The crown will find an heir. *Great Alexander*  
*Left his to the worthiest : so his successor*  
*Was like to be the best."*

Act V. Sc. 1.

Another element arises from *the enumeration of parts*, and an instance occurs in the Socrates of Theodectes. "Towards what temple hath he been guilty of impiety? whom of the gods hath he not honoured?" Book II. ch. xxiii. § 13.

Of this form of enthymeme, Autolycus favors us with an example:—

"*Shepherd.* Are you a courtier, an 't like you, sir?

*Aut.* Whether it like me or no, I am a courtier. See'st thou not the air of the court in these enfoldings? hath not my gait in it the measure of the court? receives not thy nose court-odor from me? reflect I not on thy baseness court-contempt? Think'st thou for that I insinuate or toze from thee thy business, I am, therefore, no courtier? *I am courtier cap-a-pé.*" Act IV. Sc. 3.

Another occurs where we want to exhort or dissuade respecting two propositions and those opposed to each other; for instance, a priestess was endeavoring to prevent her son from becoming a public speaker, because, said she, "If on the one hand you speak what is just, *men* will hate you; if what is unjust, *the gods*." "Here then it might be retorted, therefore you ought to become a public speaker, for if you speak what is just the *gods* will love you; if what is unjust, *men*." Book II. ch. xxiii. § 15.

This is the dilemma (a part of which is the argument *a fortiori* previously quoted) in which Camillo finds himself:—

"*What case stand I in?* I must be the poisoner  
 Of good Polyxenes; and my ground to do 't  
 Is the obedience to a master, one  
 Who in rebellion with himself will have  
 All that are his so too: *To do this deed,*  
*Promotion follows.* If I could find example  
 Of thousands that had struck anointed kings  
 And flourish'd after, I'd not do it; but since  
 Nor brass nor stone nor parchment bears *not one,*  
 Let villainy itself forswear 't. I must  
 Forsake the court: *to do 't, or no, is certain*  
*To me a break-neck."*

Act I. Sc. 2.

That is, If I do this deed, the king will reward, but the gods will



punish me ; if I do it not, the gods will reward, but the king will punish me.

Another element which may be resorted to is from assuming a possible end as the real one ; as that insinuation in the Ajax of Theodectes "that Diomed chose Ulysses not as any compliment, but in order that his attendant might at the same time be his inferior." For it is very possible that he did so on this account. Book II. ch. xxiii. § 20.

Thus Leontes attributes the flight of Camillo not to his own threats in case he did not poison Polyxenes, but to his being a confederate with him : —

"Camillo was his help, his pander :  
There's a *plot* against my life, my crown :  
*All's true that is mistrusted : that false villain*  
*Whom I employ'd was pre-employ'd by him."*

Act II. Sc. 1.

Another is the consideration of the *motives* which stimulate or retard men and the objects with a view to which they both act and avoid. Book II. ch. xxiii. § 21.

Thus Leontes attempts to persuade Camillo of his sincerity and of the justice of his charges against the Queen : —

"Dost think I am so muddy, so unsettled,  
*To appoint myself in this vexation ? sully*  
The purity and whiteness of my sheets,  
Which to preserve is sleep, which being spotted  
Is goads, thorns, nettles, tails o' wasps ?  
Give scandal to the blood of the prince, my son,  
Who I do think is mine and love as mine,  
*Without ripe moving to 't ? Would I do this ?*  
*Could man so blench ?"*

Act I. Sc. 2.

Another element refutative is the consideration of *contradictions* : if there occur any contradiction under all the circumstances of time, conduct, *sayings*, and the like (Book II. ch. xxiii. § 23), as in the following answer of Leontes to Paulina's charge of his being a tyrant : —

"Were I a tyrant,  
Where were her life ? *she durst not call me so,*  
*If she did know me one. Away with her."*

Act II. Sc. 3.

Another, applicable to those *who have been calumniated*, or who

appear so, whether men or actions, is the explaining the cause of the mistaken notion, for there is some circumstance on account of which it appears to be the case. Book II. ch. xxiii. § 24.

This form of enthymeme is used by Hermione to refute the inferences drawn from her intimacy with Polyxenes:—

“For Polyxenes,  
With whom I am accus’d, I do confess  
I lov’d him as in honor he requir’d  
With such a kind of love, as might become  
A lady like me,” etc.

Act III. Sc. 2.

Another, which occurs when anything *anomalous to former acts* is about to be done, is the considering them both in connection. Book II. ch. xxiii. § 27.

By this formula Paulina confutes the assertions of the court-poet respecting the unequaled beauty of Perdita:—

“*Gent.* She’s the most peerless piece of earth, I think,  
That e’er the sun shone bright on.

*Paul.* O Hermione,  
As every present time doth boast itself  
Above a better gone, so must thy grave  
Give way to what’s seen now. Sir, *you yourself*  
*Have said and writ so (but your writing now*  
*Is colder than that theme), ‘She had not been,*  
*Nor was not to be equal’d ;’—thus your verse*  
*Flow’d with her beauty once ; ’t is shrewdly ebb’d,*  
*To say you have seen a better.”*

Act V. Sc. 1.

Another (apparent) enthymeme arises from asserting that as a logical property which is not so (Book II. ch. xxii. § 7), as in the answer of Polyxenes, who had been asserting the innocence of Leontes and himself in boyhood:—

“*Hermione.* By this we gather  
You have tripp’d since.

*Pol.* O my most sweet lady,  
Temptations have since been born to us ; for  
In those unfledg’d days was my wife a girl ;  
Your precious self had not then cross’d the eyes  
Of my young my play-fellow.

*Her.* Grace to boot !  
Of this make no conclusion ; lest you say  
Your queen and I are devils.”

Act I. Sc. 2.

The foregoing passages which exemplify so many varied forms of *general* arguments (more than half of the whole number enumerated by Aristotle being applied to the questions of the play) render the piece illustrative of that branch of the Art of Judgment, termed by Bacon "*the invention of arguments*:" they, with others not cited, also appertain to the Art of Rhetoric, and give to the style of the play a thoroughly enthymematic and argumentative cast; so much so as to make the piece from beginning to end an example of the deductive method wherein the proofs and demonstrations depend upon the syllogism.

These "topics" or general forms of arguments being all drawn from Aristotle, it will, perhaps, be alleged that if any correspondence exists between them and passages of the play, such correspondence, if it is of any weight as evidence whatever, and even if it can be assumed that it cannot be found to exist to the same extent in any other play, proves only that the writer of *The Winter's Tale* was acquainted with Aristotle's works. Unquestionably so, if there were no other probabilities to be considered; but it must be remembered that these *general* forms of argument depending on the laws of the mind and not on the subject to which they are applied, must be the same in all rhetorical works, and that, as Bacon says, "they are so *diligently treated*," that he, writing generally of the Art of Rhetoric (in his Divisions of the Sciences), did not think it at all necessary to specify them in detail. Had he done so, he would have been obliged to make a list virtually the same as Aristotle's; and it is very possible that the writer of the play, even were he professedly attempting to exemplify *the invention of arguments* (as one of Bacon's divisions), might have availed himself of Aristotle's enumeration as convenient and suited to his purpose.

But whether by accident or design, a large number of these "topics" or "elements" are in the play, and they can properly be taken to elucidate Bacon's doctrine.

According to Bacon, "there are and can be only two ways of searching into and discovering truth. The one flies from the senses and particulars to the most general axioms, and from these principles the truth of which it takes for settled and immovable, proceeds to judgment and discovery of middle axioms; and this way is now in fashion. The other derives axioms from the senses and particulars rising by gradual and unbroken ascent, so that



it arrives at the most general axioms last of all. This is the true way, but as yet untried." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 19.

These are respectively the Deductive and Inductive methods : the first dependent for its proofs on argument, reasoning, and logic ; the latter on experience.

The conclusions arrived at by the first method are called by Bacon *anticipations*, as being hasty and premature ; they are mere *presumptions*, and do not rise to the rank of established truths. But however unavailing they may be for discovering the secrets of nature, they are serviceable in all civil business, for, as Bacon says " in sciences founded on *opinion* and *dogmas* the use of anticipations and logic is good, for in them the object is to *command assent*, not to master the thing." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 29.

Of such anticipations or presumptions are the common opinions prevalent among men, the greater number of which are adopted without examination, and though regarded as truths in the general usage of the world, do not rise above probability. It is from this source that the rhetorician and all who attempt to persuade or accuse or praise, or the contrary, draw the propositions which form the premises of their arguments.

The latter or inductive method is that on which Bacon founds his Experimental Philosophy or Interpretation of Nature. This system is exemplified in *Cymbeline*, where the truth is arrived at by induction, and at the same time the fallacy of judgments and inferences derived from *signs* is exposed : the former method is that of the ancient and scholastic philosophies, which are professorial and disputatious in their nature, aim at forming sects, and exist rather as furnishing opportunities for eloquence than for the discovery of such truth as can benefit man's estate. Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 7.

Of this method in practice, *The Winter's Tale* is an exhibition, for in it, in the absence of all direct evidence, men are represented as forming their conclusions by inferences drawn syllogistically from signs and probabilities, — of which Leontes is a conspicuous instance, — and throughout the discussions in the dialogue of the piece is exemplified the kind of proof and demonstration used by those rhetorical schools of philosophy which battled only for opinions, leaving all really useful discoveries to Time and Chance (*vide* De Aug. Book V. ch. ii.) ; even as the

discovery of the birth and parentage of Perdita and the consequent fulfillment of the oracle, — on which the fortunes of all the characters are made to turn, — are brought about by no direct investigation on the part of those interested, but solely by the chances and changes of Time.

And as an instance of the fidelity with which this play-writer adheres in the selection of his rhetorical figures to his subject, the passage may be cited in which the effect of Perdita's ideal beauty is described by an allusion to the old system of philosophizing that aimed at proselyting and the formation of sects.

"This is a creature  
Would she begin a sect, might quench the zeal  
Of all professors else ; make proselytes  
Of who she but bid follow."

Act V. Sc. 1.

According to Bacon, poetry is "feigned history," for he passes by "satire, elegy, epigram, odes, etc., and turns them over to the arts of speech and under the name of poetry treats of nothing more than *imaginary history*." De Aug. Book II. ch. xiii.

It is obvious that *The Winter's Tale* is an imaginary history, and it is equally clear that it is intended as an imitation of a work of poetic art ; it therefore falls directly under the definition which Bacon gives of poetry as "feigned history." In the language of the piece itself, it is "a history devised and played to take spectators."

The glow of poetic enthusiasm, which expresses itself in bold and figurative language, is imitated — mechanically, as it were — by the free use of amplification and hyperbole ; and we cannot too much admire and wonder at that firm hand and unerring judgment which are never betrayed into overcharging the exaggeration, and thus dropping into bathos and bombast. Take as an instance the description of the Statue, which turns on the notions of *likeness* and *time* : "a piece *many years* in doing and now newly performed by that rare Italian master Julio Romano, who had he himself *eternity*, and could put breath into his work, would beguile nature of her custom, so *perfectly is he her ape* ; he so *near to Hermione hath done Hermione*, that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer : thither with all *greediness of affection* they are gone."

In the following description of Perdita's grief at hearing of



her mother's death, the hyperbole is carried to the extremest limit of good taste.

"Till from one sign of dolor to another, she did with an 'alas,' I would fain say *bleed tears*, for I am sure *my heart wept blood* ! Who was most *marble there* changed color ; some *swooned*, all *sorrowed* : if all the world could have seen it, the woe had been *universal*."

Much of the *curiosa felicitas* that marks the diction and metaphor of this piece cannot be here touched upon ; but since it is assumed that *The Winter's Tale* is a work which displays the characteristics of Shakespearian art in a marked and emphatic manner, and as one of those characteristics is the constant repetition, under various forms, of the opposite conceptions involved in the dominant idea, thus imparting an inner life and a surpassing unity of effect to a piece, it will be necessary to show, at the risk of repeating some few particulars, how this is the case with *The Winter's Tale*.

The play announces by its title that it is a work of art ; and it views life as an art ; but the aim of art is the creation of the beautiful, and a view of life is therefore taken of which the guiding principle is "the good and fair," or say Honor, the ornament and grace of life. Honor lies in the speeches and judgments of men, and is but a name for that good opinion awarded to the practice of love and truth. It is the object of true art to form a man of integrity, a well-rounded whole, by assimilating character to the idea of moral goodness. All the characters of the piece are measured by this standard, and in proportion as they successfully imitate or copy this model do they win honor and beautify life.

But the virtues that make up the moral ideal are those which unite men and may be considered principles of unity, while the selfish desires and affections separate men and may be considered principles of *division*. Therefore throughout Shakespearian tragedy and comedy, resting as they do on the love and truth that are the moral life of the world and the source of all rules that regulate human conduct, unity and division are fundamental conceptions. These conceptions are modified in each particular play according to the relations represented or the subject treated of. *The Winter's Tale*, being a typical piece, must take for its organic idea the moral ideal itself, but the conceptions of unity



and division are modified (though but slightly) by the special view taken of life as an art. The two essential qualities of a work of imitative art are *likeness* (i. e., life spirit, truth to nature) in the parts and the *union* or *unity* of the parts in one harmonious whole. The opposite of *likeness* is *difference*, and the opposite of *union* is *separation*; therefore *likeness* and *difference*, *union* and *separation*, are the continually recurring conceptions, which are held in æsthetic balance throughout the piece.

It should be noted, however, that as the drama represents human life and consequently human error, the notions that spring from the principles of division are those which generally give the key-note to a piece. Thus in this play, the reader is impressed with a sense of difference and separation, and this no doubt has led to the supposition that the piece is defective in unity, such defect being attributed to the violation of the unities of time and place; whereas this is the very impression the poet intends to convey, it seemingly being his design to exemplify his own method by hiding, under a form that extravagantly violates the mere mechanical unities, a moral or spiritual unity, by which all differences are finally reconciled, and all the scattered strands of the story drawn into one knot.

The simplest form of a work made up of 'parts united in one whole is that of two parts constituting a *pair*. The poet, therefore, assumes a *pair* as a type of *likeness* and *union*, opposed to which are *difference*, *separation*, etc.

The principles of union and separation are seen in full play in the action of the piece. The characters fall into pairs, as Leontes and Polyxenes, a pair of friends; Florizel and Perdita, a pair of lovers; Leontes and Hermione, a married pair; likewise Antigonus and Paulina; Cleomenes and Dion, a pair of messengers; Shepherd and son, a pair of clowns; Mopsa and Dorcas, a pair of rustic beauties or rivals, etc.

The notion of a "pair" is frequently introduced directly, as Polyxenes' description of the boyhood of himself and Leontes.

" We were as twin'd lambs, that did frisk i' the sun  
And bleat the one at the other."

Under this head fall all allusions to what is *fit*, *matched*, *suitable*, etc.

A *pair* implies *likeness*, physical or moral. Original and copy

make a *pair* and involve necessarily the notions of *parity*, *equality*, *mutuality*, *reciprocity*, etc., which are constantly recurring.

Leontes sees in the likeness of Mamillius to himself a proof of his legitimacy; and Paulina sees in the likeness of the babe to Leontes a similar proof; and still another instance is the following:—

“Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince;  
For she did *print* your royal father off,  
Conceiving you: Were I but twenty-one  
*Your father's image is so hit in you,*  
*His very air;* that I should call you brother,  
As I did him,” etc.

Act V. Sc. 1.

The following phrases are so constructed as to introduce the notions of *likeness*, *parity*, *equality*, or *repetition*, for that which is repeated or done *again* is a copy or imitation.

“*Nine changes of the wat'ry star* have been  
The shepherd's note since first we left our throne  
Without a burden; *time as long again*  
Could be fill'd,” etc.

“But *such a day to-morrow as to-day.*”

“He makes a *July's day short as December.*”

“He that wears her like her medal  
About his neck, Bohemia—who—if I  
Had servants about me that bare eyes  
To see *alike mine honor as their profits,*” etc.

“Plainly as *heaven sees earth and earth sees heaven.*”

“Will take again your queen, as yours at first.”

“Your *chang'd* complexions are to me a mirror  
Which shows me mine *chang'd* too.”

“The most *replenish'd* villain . . . were as much more villain.”

“Should a *like language* use to all degrees.”

“*So long* as nature  
Will bear up, *so long* I vow to use it.”

"You have  
*As little skill to fear as I have purpose*  
 To put you to 't."

"There is *not half a kiss to choose*  
 Who loves another best."

"I will make *her portion equal his*."

"And again *does nothing*  
 But *what he did, being childless*."

"It is as *bitter upon thy tongue as in my thoughts*."

"To *bless the bed of majesty again*  
 With a *sweet fellow to 't*."

"Our prince *had pair'd well with this lord*."  
 "He *dies to me again when talk'd of*."

"The *odds for high and low's alike*."

"You *ow'd no more time than I do now*."

"Which *sixteen winters cannot blow away*  
 So *many summers dry*."

. . . "Not *these twenty years,*  
*So long could I*  
 Stand by" —

"Until you see her *die again, for then*  
 You *kill her double*."

So too, in order to vary the form, parity, or equality is produced by negating the difference — as

"No *less honest than you are mad*."

"Which *no less adorns our gentry*  
 Than our *parents' noble names*."

The foregoing quotations, numerous as they are, could easily be multiplied. The Statue scene alone would furnish a page or two of instances of *likeness* and its equivalents.

In a work of art, unity is as important as likeness; and the notion of *unity* will be a prevalent one in the diction and phraseology of the piece.



*Unity* may be predicated of a single individual or of the many in one, or of the one in many, or of a whole made up of parts, as in the case of any theory, the facts of which are held together by a common principle. Circumstantial evidence, for instance, rests on a theory, and is conclusive in proportion to the *unity* with which all the parts refer themselves to one and the same presumptive fact or mental conception. In the play, the evidence by which Perdita's birth and parentage are established is thus spoken of :—

"2 *Gent.* Has the king found his heir ?

3 *Gent.* Most true ; if ever *truth* were pregnant by circumstance : that which you hear, you'll swear you see, there is such *unity* in the proofs,—the mantle of queen *Hermione* :—her jewel about the neck of it :—the letters of *Antigonus*, found with it, which they know to be his character :—the majesty of the creature, in resemblance of the mother—the affection of nobleness which nature shows above her breeding,—and many other evidences proclaim her with all certainty to be the king's daughter." Act V. Sc. 3.

Unity is implied also in *singularity*, which is affined with the *ideal*, for the ideal, or what is *best* or superlative, is single. Thus prominence and singularity are given to some particular object by the separation and exclusion of all others of its kind.

"There is no tongue that moves, none, none i' the world  
So soon as yours could move me."

" Wishing all eyes blind  
With the pin and wet, but theirs, theirs only."

" Stars, stars  
And all eyes else dead coals."

" No hearing, no feeling, but my sir's song."

" Even thou, that hast  
A heart so tender over it, take it hence ;  
Even thou, and none but thou."

*Unity*, again, is expressed by distinguishing one of several kinds, as in the lines, —

" Lilies of all kinds,  
The flower-de-luce being one."

In the following, one is singled out of many as an example.

"Yet shall the oracle  
Give rest to the minds of the others, *such as he*  
Whose ignorant credulity will not  
Come up to the truth."

The ideal or superlative implies also the relation of one to all, which relation is thus expressed by Polyxenes' description of his boy.

"He's *all my exercise, my mirth, my matter :*  
*Now my sworn friend and then mine enemy ;*  
*My parasite, my soldier, statesman, all."*

The union of many in one, or the relation of one to all, is contained in the old Shepherd's sketch of his wife.

"Fye, daughter ! when my old wife liv'd, upon  
This day, she was *both pantler, butler, cook,*  
*Both dame and servant, welcom'd all, serv'd all ;*  
*Would sing her song and dance her turn, now here*  
*At th' upper end o' the table, now in the middle ;*  
*On his shoulder, and his : her face o' fire*  
*With labor ; and the thing she took to quench it*  
*She would to each one sip."*

In the next, there is the relation of *one to all* through the superlative.

"But, *of all*, the burst  
And the ear-deafening *voice of the oracle*," etc.

And to descend to minuter particulars — which have an interest as a proof of the amazing activity of the poet's mind — words may be adverted to, which are expressive of parts united in one whole, as "*four-threes, one-three, by twos and threes*, etc. Also compound terms, in which two or more words are blended into one, with a joint meaning, as rain-bow, love-songs, trot-my-dames, three-man-song-men, flower-de-luce ; foot-path, foot-man, horse-man, bearing-cloth, process-server, stretch-mouth'd, good-faced, crown-imperial, admirable-conceited, kiln-hole, tittle-tattle, table-book, horn-ring, and a host of others.

Opposed to *likeness, parity, equality, union*, etc., are *difference, disjunction, separation*, and other similar notions. The fable of a Shakespearian play takes its movement, as has been said, from a principle of disunion, for dramatic fables are pictures of crimes or vices which, of course, are violations of truth and goodness. And so it is with *The Winter's Tale*. The love that exists between the pair of kings and the happy state of feeling generally at the

Court of Sicily are broken up and destroyed by the jealousy of Leontes, who suspects his wife and his friend of infidelity towards himself. He "*puts between* their holy looks his ill-suspicious," and engenders a discord that reaches all parties, who are at once disjoined and scattered, and a long period of time intervenes before a return of love and trust heals the breach and reunites them.

These notions of *separation*, *disjunction*, etc., have great influence in shaping the figures and phraseology of the piece.

And first, separation, or its equivalent, *interval*, is implied in the conception of Time, to which as the parent of truth Man in this play is portrayed as related. Of time no definite conception can be formed except as of intervals in a succession of thoughts or events; of moments between thoughts; of hours, days, or longer periods between events; therefore under this head may be placed the very numerous allusions to time and the incidents universally associated with it; these need not be specified, as they are too obvious to escape observation.

*Interval*, however, is many times directly introduced as thus:—

"I would there *were no age between ten and three-and-twenty*, or that youth would sleep out the rest, for there is nothing *in the between* but wronging the ancients," etc.

"I lost a couple that *'twixt heaven and earth*  
*Might thus have stood, begetting wonder.*"

"He had himself  
*The lands and waters 'twixt your throne and his*  
*Measured to look upon you.*"

Imitative of *interval* are inverted comparisons in which the thoughts appear to be separated and placed opposite to each other, as, —

"The root of his opinion, which is *as rotten*  
*As ever oak or stone was sound.*"

"I will devise a *death as cruel* for thee  
*As thou art tender to it.*"

"She is *as forward of her breeding*, as  
*She is i' the rear of our birth.*"

"How *he glisters*  
*Thorough my rust*; and how *his piety*  
*Does my deeds make the blacker!*"



Separation is also imitated in the style by the introduction of a large number of *dilemmas* and *disjunctive propositions*; and these fall in also with the argumentative style of the piece.

“How say you ?

*My prisoner or my guest ? By your dread verily  
One of them you shall be.”*

“*One of these two must be necessities*

*Which then will speak ; that you must change this purpose  
Or I my life.”*

“I pr’y thee darken not

*The mirth o’ the feast. Or I’ll be thine, my fair,  
Or not my father’s ; for I cannot be  
Mine own nor anything to any, if  
I be not thine.”*

“Though I with death and with

*Reward did threaten and encourage him  
Not doing it and being done.”*

“I would not prize them

*Without her love ; for her employ them all :  
Commend them or condemn them to her service  
Or to their own perdition.”*

There are other like instances, but the foregoing are sufficient to show that the notions of *separation*, *disjunction*, etc. are both directly and indirectly made to pervade the piece.

No analysis will be offered of the diction, although it has some peculiar and curious features ; but it may be remarked, that as *Honor* depends upon truth and veracity, the personages of the piece are all engaged earnestly in maintaining their opinions and assertions by *evidence* either of the senses, or of circumstances, or by logical proofs, arguments, and persuasions. With *evidence* are associated words and phrases referring to *testimony*, swearing, oaths, vows, attestations, affirming, denying, and others. Many phrases are also introduced by way of maxim or proverb, embodying the opinion of the world at large, or truths attested by the general experience of mankind or sayings commonly received and believed. And it is observable that so careful is this artist to preserve the æsthetic balance of the diction of his pieces that inasmuch as swearing and oaths imply an imprecation, he throws into the dialogue a multitude of ejaculations, prayers, invocations, and petitions by way of offset, as “Beseech you,” “Pray you,”

"Would that," "Be you blessed;" "Happy star reign now," "The Higher Powers forbid," "Prosper you, sweet sir," "Jove afford you cause," and many others, some of them forming passages of several lines.

Imperfect and inadequate as is the foregoing analysis of the rhetoric of the piece (and under the head of *rhetoric*, the liberty is taken of grouping all that appertains to the verbal expression of the idea of the piece), it has yet been carried into more minute details than would have been thought necessary but for the prevalent impression that *The Winter's Tale*, though a delightful drama and the work of a great genius, is nevertheless but a careless dramatization of an old novel filled with ridiculous blunders and infractions of rule and wholly unworthy of the name of a work of art. The intent here is to show that this opinion is founded on a total misconception of the scope of the play; that this dramatic legend is, in fact, an exquisite product of art, of which the very theme is Art; that it is as finished in execution as it is beautiful in design, and that it required a grace of mind, a delicacy of taste, a mastery of language, and a poetic power and sympathy in the treatment of the subject that have rarely, if ever, been equaled; nay more, it may be said to exemplify in a most marked manner a profound and original dramatic art, which by throwing aside the rules of a past and outworn age, vastly enlarges the poet's scope and power; and in this respect it can be taken as an example of that kind of improvement to which Bacon looked forward in works of art, both mechanical and liberal, and of which he speaks in the *Novum Organum*, Book II. Aph. 31, as follows:—

"Among Prerogative Instances I will put Instances of Power, which I call also *Instances of the Wit or Hands of Man*. These are the noblest and most consummate works in each art, exhibiting the ultimate perfection of it . . . *starting from them* we shall find an *easier and nearer passage to new works hitherto unattempted*. For if from an attentive contemplation of these a man pushes on his work with zeal and activity, he will infallibly either advance them a little further or turn them aside to something in the neighborhood or even *apply and transfer them to some more noble use*.

"Nor is this all. But as by rare and extraordinary works of nature the understanding is excited and raised to the investigation



and discovery of *Forms* capable of including them, so also is this done by excellent and wonderful works of Art, and that in a much greater degree, because the method of creating and constructing such miracles of art is in most cases plain, whereas in the miracles of nature it is generally obscure. But with these also we must use the utmost caution, lest they depress the understanding and fasten it, as it were, to the ground.

“For there is danger lest the contemplation of such works of art, which appear to be the very summits and crowning points of human industry, may so astonish and bind and bewitch the understanding with regard to them, that it *shall be incapable of dealing with any other, but shall think that nothing can be done in that kind except by the same way in which these were done.* . . .

“Whereas on the contrary *this is certain, that the ways and means of achieving the effects and works hitherto discovered and observed are for the most part very poor things ; and that all power of a high order depends on Forms.*”

By this aphorism, it appears that Bacon held that there was a strict analogy between the works of nature and the works of art (including the “liberal arts” of which poetry and the drama are members), and that in order to advance art still further, the great masterpieces should be studied with a view to the discovery of *Forms* capable of including them, and that in his opinion this discovery would not be difficult “because the method of creating and constructing such miracles of art is in most cases plain,” and he adds “that *the ways and means of achieving the effects and works hitherto discovered and observed are for the most part very poor things, and that all power of a high order depends on Forms.*”

While this aphorism is supposed to apply mainly to the mechanical arts, it also expressly mentions “the *liberal arts* as far as they deal with works,” and thus includes the Fine Arts and the Drama ; with respect to which last, it may be considered a somewhat sweeping judgment of the superficial artistic methods that had prevailed until that period ; and indeed, it may be construed as meaning that in his judgment the masterpieces of the classic drama that relied for their artistic unity upon the observance of the external unities of time, place, and action, were, as exemplars of constructive art and “in their *ways and means* of achieving effects, *very poor things,*” and he would not have men



"think that *nothing can be done except by the same way in which these were done.*"

But what did Bacon mean by *Form*? Taking together all that he says by way of definition, a form or formal cause may be considered as the constitutive principle or indwelling law which determines the specific qualities or essential nature of a thing. It is the *form* which makes a thing what it is; the schoolmen called it "the quiddity," and Bacon himself speaks of it as *ipsis-sima res*, the very thing itself, and says that "the thing differs from the form no otherwise than as the apparent differs from the real or the external from the internal." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 51, Book II. Aph. 2, 17, *et als.*

The *form*, then, of a drama must, according to this doctrine, be an *idea* or formative principle that rules and shapes every part of the work, and of which the story, characters, incidents, composition, and diction are but vehicles and exponents. An idea of some kind must necessarily lie at the bottom of every work of true art, but in most cases this idea, instead of being an active and formative principle that correlates all parts of the work, is only some general conception that serves to connect the parts in a loose manner without effecting any very strict union among them; in such cases the parts are not absolutely of a common growth; but an idea that answers to the Baconian *form* must be constructive and organic, and cause the work to exist as a product of itself, and must, as an inward shaping energy, realize itself outward in the play.

From *The Winter's Tale* it is fairly inferable that the writer of it had followed the same line of study and thought which led Bacon to suggest an examination of works of (literary) art, with a view to the discovery of the "Forms capable of including them," inasmuch as he carries Bacon's advice fully into practice, and unrestricted by "the ways and means of achieving effects and works hitherto discovered and observed" (which we may fairly suppose included the dramatic rules and unities of the Greeks), he wrote plays in utter disregard of classical canons, whenever the exigencies of the plot required it; relying for the artistic effect of his work and its sufficiency to satisfy the sense of beauty upon the unity produced by making it the development of a "form;" and upon examining the plays, we find that they — or, at least, the later ones — are each comprehended under the

“form” or idea of some particular mode of literary expression or what is commonly called a literary form, being that style or mode of treatment which usage has assigned to certain classes of subjects, — of which history, biography, travels, the novel, fable, allegory, essay, and others are examples. The idea underlying each of these different modes of literary expression is, according to Bacon’s mode of terming it, its “form,” which, when stated with precision, is a definition of the end or purpose of such writing; as, for instance, the end of history is to form a judgment of men by experience, and this fully and precisely expressed is its “form,” which, when taken as a constructive principle for a drama, — as it is in *Cymbeline*, — makes the piece a history, of which the characters have for their rule and guide in life the use of experience in judging of men’s natures and conduct, which rule when they depart from they fall into error and often into ruin; or, to take the case of a dialogue or discourse, the end of which is the maintenance of propositions by proofs, and this is its “form,” which, when adopted as the organic idea of a play, — as in *Much Ado* it is, — imparts to it the features of a discourse, in which the opinions and conduct of the characters are more or less conformable to reason according as they are moulded and influenced by conclusions supported by valid proofs; or again, the end and purpose of a fable is to teach moral truth by symbols, and such is its law or “form,” which may be violated by giving more importance to the symbol than to the reality; and in the case of a play built up on this “form” — like *Lear*, for instance — its persons will exhibit their affinities with the world of sense or of soul in proportion as they adjudge the symbol or the reality best worthy of their affections; and so with other literary forms adopted as constructive principles of plays.

This doctrine of Bacon’s of evolving plays as works of art from “forms” is, after all, but an extension by a bold and commanding genius of the usual division of plays into tragedy and comedy, under the idea of one or the other of which it is generally supposed that all plays can be included; but although these two opposite modes of representing human actions point especially to man’s relations to sin or to folly, out of which respectively spring these two kinds of the modern drama, as generic styles of literary art (of which the “forms” or ideas are specially developed in *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night*), they are very far from ex-



hausting the many ends and aspects of life, which are each capable of furnishing matter for a distinct mode of literary expression, and of which "the form" can be taken as the organic law for a drama. Good old Polonius gives us "tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, . . . *scene indivisible and poem unlimited*" (in which two last mentioned he evidently alludes to plays which have unity and those which have none); but though Polonius's pedantry is over-nice in its distinctions, the passage is an indication that the writer of it recognized many other kinds of dramatic writing than tragedy and comedy, for besides history and pastoral, there may be added not only the literary forms mentioned above, but also the parable, masque, farce, satire, and various others, among which is the present instance, a winter's tale. All these have each its own style and its own moral purpose; and plays which are developments of such literary forms will present that phase of life and that department of thought and feeling of which the true ends are defined and expressed in what Bacon would technically term its "form." This will account for the peculiar stamp which each play possesses, and for that difference of manner which is so great that it has led to conjectures that the plays were by different hands. Of course, their unity as works of art is from the same source. And it would seem that towards the close of his career, and after he had fully matured his method, he wrote a play apparently for the purpose of showing how thoroughly unity can be imparted to a work by a "form" or idea in spite of the grossest violations of the three dramatic unities, — in fact, making such violation contribute to the effect of his piece. And as this method points to a direct parallel, in an important respect, between the play and Bacon's views, it will be set forth in a brief summary, although it may involve some particulars already touched upon.

The poet takes as a constructive principle the "form" or idea of "a winter's tale," which, according to Bacon, falls under the head of poesy or feigned history, and is a work of imitative art, and as such requires likeness to nature in its parts and unity as a whole; but a winter's tale is, on account of the supposed ignorance of its narrator, a rude art, and this rudeness reappears in the dramatic copy as a violation of the "unities." Yet this irregularity is not a blemish in the play; on the contrary, it is a beauty, inasmuch as thereby the play reflects all the more faith-



fully the spirit of its original; just as any homely, prosaic, or defective object, such as a blasted tree or a ruined hovel, may become picturesque and beautiful in a painting from the truth and spirit with which its idea is executed. But the drama being a picture of life, a play which embodies the idea of a work of art, however irregular, must make the rule of art the rule of life, that is, the *beau-idéal* or that perfect model of goodness and beauty, by copying which characters and manners are invested with dignity, grace, courtesy, and a sense and love of honor, — as is seen in Hermione, Perdita, Florizel, Paulina, and others; while the neglect of such rule is apparent in rude and violent manners, in falsehood, impudence, dishonesty, which are conspicuous in Leontes (temporarily) and Autolycus.

It may be observed in passing, that so marked in each kind are these opposite lines of conduct and manners, that they furnish good examples of the precepts laid down by Bacon with respect to *Wisdom of Behaviour*.

As a copy of the external form, however beautiful, is but a lifeless mask unless it be vivified by the spirit or idea, the poet satisfies this requirement with regard to his characters in the portrayal of their deeper natures, from which their manners spring. Of the desires and passions that prompt to action, there are two classes, one affined more nearly with the sensual, the other with the spiritual, side of our nature. To the latter class belong the feelings which have their root in pride and resentment, and which evince spirit and natural fire, such as the love of honor, the dread of shame; the preference of death to disgrace; the sense of superiority, indignation at wrong, courage, jealousy, revenge. These qualities are the prominent traits of the different personages of the piece, and they are carried to the highest pitch by being coupled with an ardor, an eagerness, a vehemency of mind, which renders the expression of them unusually animated and spirited. The two most highly colored pieces of painting in the play are the jealousy of Leontes and the zeal of the hot-tempered Paulina. But jealousy and zeal are but different forms of a natural heat of mind, and, in fact, but different forms of the same word, the etymon of which signifies *to boil, to be hot*. The same ardor is exhibited in the grief of Mamillius at his mother's disgrace, in the fervor of Florizel, in the devotion of Antigonus, in the rivalry of Mopsa and Dorcas, in the enthusiasm

excited by the pedler's songs, in the indefatigable pursuit of his vocation by Autolycus. Even the high-minded Hermione, who scorns to yield to tears, feels "an honorable grief that *burns* worse than tears drown."

And thus the poet takes as the basis of his characters those qualities that evince the life and spirit of the soul, augments their ardor and vehemence, giving

"To every power a double power  
Above their functions and their offices,"

and lifts the whole to that ideal plane which, in an imitation of a work of imagination, is assumed as the ordinary level of human action. In this way his picture is filled with life, fire, spirit, and animation, which fully meet the requirements in this respect of the "form" of his piece.

The incidents of the play, also, flow from the same idea, for beauty of conduct has its practical and every-day example in the man of honor and veracity, who both scrupulously guards his own word and refrains from the slightest unfounded statement that can impeach the honor of others. The accusation of Hermione by Leontes, on which turn the first three acts, is a gross breach of this rule, as on the other hand the fidelity of Florizel to Perdita, which determines the action of the rest of the piece, is a beautiful instance of "that honesty and honor that endures all weathers."

Moreover, the *beau-idéal*, or "the good and fair," is the standard of morals and manners in a world of the highest breeding, or a world taken at its best. Such a world finds its representatives in the most honored and honorable class, with whom high worth and fine manners are habitual characteristics, and who set the highest possible estimate on a reputation for an unblemished life and decorous deportment. But reputation lies in the speeches of men which, whether true or false, are *testimony*, and as such impart no knowledge of a higher degree than *opinion*; on which account reputation, in cases of gross detraction, can, in the absence of all direct knowledge, rely for its vindication only upon revelations of the truth made by Chance and Time.

And here, again, it may be observed that this conception enables the dramatist to make his play an image of those inefficient theoretical systems of philosophy (denounced by Bacon) which,



neglecting experimental knowledge, are built up by argument on mere opinion, — like the suspicions of Leontes, for instance, which have not a single fact to stand on, — and leave all useful discoveries of truth to Time.

The essence of testimony is veracity; and so jealous are men of their honor that they seek to support their statements by oaths, vows, adjurations, and other like means of effecting credit and persuasion, including proofs by direct evidence, by hearsay, and by reasoning, which last are commonly used in the attack and defense of character or to give weight to opinion and counsel. Throughout the play these conceptions are continually recurring, the whole dialogue being argumentative, thus uniting art with philosophy, for so numerous and various are the passages of this kind that they furnish apt and admirable examples of the rules of oratory and persuasion as laid down in the art of rhetoric.

The “form” of the piece, moreover, both on its moral and its artistic side, flows into the composition, and infuses into every part of its rhetoric and diction its constituent conceptions of honesty, honor, integrity, truth, grace, propriety, beauty, and also likeness, spirit, life, unity, totality, and others, with their corresponding opposites, giving shape not only to the more prominent features of the style, to metaphors, similes, phrases, and descriptions, but even to single words and particles, to oaths, ejaculations, interjections, and adverbs.

The foregoing summary omits many points in the development of the idea, but it is perhaps sufficient to show the similarity between Bacon's suggestions and the poet's practice. It shows a method which is probably as close an imitation of the processes of Nature in the formation of an organism as it is possible to effect by the instrumentality of language; and as a Baconian “form” or inward cause manifests itself in the various and specific qualities of a thing, and *is* the thing, differing from it only as the real differs from the apparent, so an idea of a play *is* the play; it is *ipsissima res* or the very thing itself, and differs from it only as the soul or spirit differs from the outward body, which is its product and manifestation.

By this method of working, a unity of effect is produced so all pervading that the poet is rendered independent of the measurements of time, which he lengthens or shortens at pleasure, as the needs of his action demand, — “such tricks hath strong imagina-



tion," — and so deep is this unity felt to be that modern criticism no longer regards "the unities" as indispensable nor denies that the Shakespearian plays are works of true art. But the case was far different three centuries ago; then the classical rules were held sacred and inviolable, and he was a man of bold and innovating genius indeed who presumed to question the authority of Aristotle in either logic or art. But Bacon did the one and "Shakespeare" did the other.

In all which the poet clearly shows that he holds with Bacon that "man, if he pushes on his works with zeal and activity, will infallibly advance them a little further," and also that he can "apply and transfer them to some more noble use," as is done in this case, by rendering them models that may be taken for the illustration of philosophy.

Of the masterpieces, termed by Bacon "instances of the Wit and *Hand of Man*," there is mention of one in the play as follows, in which also it will be observed there is the notion of *likeness* and of the *separation* of a thing from others by reason of its excellence: —

"As she liv'd peerless,  
So her *dead likeness*, I do well believe,  
Excels whatever yet you *look'd upon*  
Or *hand of man* hath done. *Wherefore I keep it*  
*Lonely, apart.* But here it is : prepare  
To see the *life as lively mock'd* as ever  
Still *sleep mock'd death.*"

Act V. Sc. 3.

This poet was evidently a great worker in words. He had supreme dominion over every form of expression, understood the dramatic effect and moral force of each different turn of phrase, and ran his thought into any mould he pleased, and that, too, without loss of grace or felicity of expression, and even when by the electric fire of passion, the word and the thought are fused into a common and indivisible amalgam, it is done in strict pursuance of a rigid method. So true, moreover, is his language to nature, that it will bear any weight of emphasis the most powerful elocution can lay upon it.

The writer of these plays is generally thought of first as a poet and then as a philosopher, but perhaps if he should be regarded as a philosopher first and then as a poet, that is, a philosopher who used a creative imagination and transcendent powers of

fancy and language for the purpose of clothing in poetic forms the abstract principles of his science of man, we might give a nearer guess at his meaning. He had his lyrical faculties completely at command. He left it to minor poets to be possessed by the god and with foaming mouth to utter oracles for the delight and instruction of mankind. He, too, can raise a storm of passion, as well as any; he can flash the lightning and roll the thunder and fill the whole heavens with coruscations and meteors of wit, but behind it all we can see the philosopher, calm and imperturbable, regulating the display and shaping the whole exhibition by his own pre-conceptions. His poetry, like Apollo's singing to the lyre after exerting his strength with the bow, was to him rather a recreation than the business of life. So great a master was he of his art, so facile and ready an imitator of every phase and feature of human nature, that he does not hesitate to take the poet and the poet's frenzy for the subject of his imitation. His mind, like another Nature, was as busy and painstaking in small things as in great, and like Nature, too, he quietly puts his works before us in all their beauty and finish, without the slightest hint of the complex processes by which they are produced. And indeed, in his unflagging attention to *minutiæ*, he seems to have had the same mental constitution that characterized Bacon, for the latter, notwithstanding his vast and sublime comprehension, dwells upon the importance of attending to the slightest turns of phrases, the *mucrones verborum*, the goads and stings of words and their power to work upon the mind. In this respect preëminent skill belonged to the writer of these plays, who, in addition to the poet's song and the philosopher's insight, possessed an ingenuity in the use of language so extraordinary as to make every word contribute to the main effect.

To summarize the results of the foregoing analysis with respect to the Baconian philosophy: *The Winter's Tale* is a poem intended to elucidate the primary principles of poetic art in general and of a new and profound dramatic art in particular; it is also a lesson in life, portraying life as under the guiding principle of Honor, and using for a standard of judgment the idea of moral goodness. But this is not drawn from experience; it is a conception of the mind, which is used to judge of men as known from hearsay and the relation of others, from history and from fiction. The play, therefore, exhibits men judging by a rule

founded in Opinion, a method which answers to that branch of the Art of Judging, which, in the absence of experience, makes its proofs by syllogism. The play is consequently written in an argumentative style and is filled with disputation and difference of opinion, and exemplifies to a surprising degree the fundamental "topics" or "places" set forth by rhetoricians for the derivation of enthymemes. And in this respect it gives numerous examples of that branch of the "Art of Invention" as laid down by Bacon, which is termed the *Invention of Arguments*. And the whole piece illustrates that mode of judging adopted by the old philosophies, which aimed only to extend opinions and theories and left all important discoveries to Time and Chance.

The examples of the rhetorical art contained in the play are illustrative of that branch of Bacon's Doctrine of Transmission, called "the doctrine concerning the adornment of discourse," and at the same time are instances of the use and practice (in dramatic life and action) of that subdivision of "Civil Knowledge," also laid down by Bacon (and as such originating with him, for he enumerates it among "the deficiencies of learning"), in which persuasion is particularly needed, that is, "counsel in the emergencies of life," including also the arts of decorum.

And around this science and philosophy is thrown a garb of legendary story, replete with the spirit of a winter's tale, and the whole stands forth a miracle of art, which, like the wonderful strain of the musician that vanquished and broke the heart of the nightingale, hath in it

"Curiosity and cunning,  
Concord in discord, lines of differing method  
Meeting in one full centre of delight."



## KING LEAR.

THIS tragedy bears some such relation to the old fable of "King Leir and his three daughters," on which it is founded, as a majestic oak bears to the acorn from which it has sprung; yet notwithstanding its magnificent expansion of the original germ, it retains the characteristics and carries the idea or "form" of a fable through all its parts, and thus becomes itself a fable or apologue in dramatic form.

The essence of a fable is to convey some knowledge of the world or of human nature by symbol and figure; and for this purpose, beasts, birds, plants, or any objects of either the animate or inanimate world are used for speakers and actors; but these absurdities are accepted for the sake of the hidden meaning which they symbolize, while their "moral" or application to human life often comes home so closely to "the bosoms and businesses of men" that they pass into popular speech as proverbs. The fable of *Lear*, however, purports to be a historical tradition, which, though wearing the air of invention proper to a myth, is not so remote from common experience as to be unfit for dramatic representation. The story is familiar: an old king worn with age and the cares of state proposes to divide his kingdom among his three daughters, and as a test of their affection, offers to give the largest portion to her who shall show that she loves him most. This trial ends in his bestowing the whole realm on his two eldest daughters as a reward for their love, of which they made loud and extravagant professions, and in disinheriting as a punishment for her pride the youngest child, who refuses to say anything. Up to this point the legend furnishes, perhaps, only a conspicuous instance of folly and self-esteem on the part of the old monarch, but it becomes deeply significant when it goes on to add, that the two daughters who, by their flattery, win the kingdom, are utterly heartless, while the youngest daughter, who refuses to proclaim her love in words, is devotedly filial in deeds. It is an image of the great world, where fraud and adulation are constantly win-

ning the prize that is due to truth and service; and the gross errors into which the old king in the distribution of his kingdom is led seems to have prompted the dramatist to consider the dispensing of rewards and punishments, as it exists in the Family and the State, in contrast with the Order of Nature, and to found thereon a tragedy which should exhibit human justice made partial by affection as itself amenable to the Eternal Equity that everywhere prevails in the government of the world. Of such government or Order, the course of nature — or chain of causes — is the representative, and is therefore assumed as the background of the piece.

The time and place of the action are in keeping with this design and with the reduction of so comprehensive a subject to a practical dramatic scale. Britain at the period represented in the play is a semi-barbarous country, of sparse population, among whom deeds of violence and outrage are common; absolute power is vested in the monarch, who holds the kingdom as an owner holds an estate, to be divided and parceled out among whom he pleases and as he pleases; the exercise of power is dependent solely on the will, the rulers passing summary judgment on offenders and inflicting the cruelest punishments with their own hands; the king and great nobles travel with their retinues on horseback from castle to castle across wild heaths; civil laws and conventional regulations are but slightly mentioned, and both man and society are left, as far as possible, subject to the law of nature alone.

By this plan are secured some highly dramatic effects; it introduces the manners of a barbarous age with their fiercer passions and stronger contrasts, and at the same time gives philosophic depth to its view of the state by tracing authority to its rightful source in the will governed by reason and wisdom.

The antithesis between the real and the factitious which runs through the Shakespearian drama, assumes in *Lear* its greatest breadth, it being nothing less than that between the world of soul and the world of sense. But *Lear* is a heathen play, and the poet adopts a view of the world similar to the heathen opinion that the world is the image of God (or symbol of spirit), and man (in the union of body and soul) the image of the world. The ancient as well as the mediæval philosophers termed man a *microcosm* or little world, on account of the correspondences and



parallels feigned to be found in his body with all variety of things which are extant in the great world (see Advancement, Book II. p. 241). But with greater propriety may man be termed a microcosm for the reason to be found in the following passage of Bacon: "God hath framed *the mind of man* as a *mirror or glass capable of the image of the universal world*, and joyful to receive the impression thereof as the eye joyeth to receive light, and not only delighted in beholding the variety of things and vicissitudes of times, but *raised also to find out and discern the ordinances and decrees, which throughout all these changes are infallibly observed*" (Adv. p. 93). And in fact it was the aim of the Baconian philosophy by the investigation of causes to "build in the human understanding *a true model of the world*" (Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 124), for the mind of man contains potentially all the laws of nature; and his changing moods and mental states have correspondences and parallels in natural facts, as when Lear, frantic with grief and buffeted by the storm, —

"Strives in *his little world of man* to out-scorn  
The *to-and-fro conflicting wind and rain*,"

or conversely, in the parallel which Gloster draws between the ending of the world and Lear's great decay: —

"O *ruined piece of Nature!* *this great world*  
*Shall so wear out to nought.*"

And the poet has therefore seen fit to make the play itself an image of the world, that is, of the microcosm or "little world of man" (for it is only with man that the drama deals), in which the primary elements of order in Society and the State are presented as existing in the family, — the family and the State here being one as the latter is represented as a patriarchy, — while all the differing conditions of men are comprised in the compend furnished by the king and the beggar. Society and human intercourse in their main features and controlling principles are here drawn to a focal point, in which as in a model we see the world with its incessant ongoings and reciprocal influences of feeling and action, its friendships and enmities, its eager pursuit of its ends, whether of business or pleasure, its sensuality and pride, its obsequious worship of wealth and power, its treachery and ingratitude, and, let us add, its devotion and self-sacrifice, together with its retributions whether ascribable to the vicissitudes of Fortune or to the dark and secret judgments of God.



By searching into the causes of the phenomena around us we become acquainted with the laws of nature and the true values of things. Every phenomenon is the product and outward representation of an indwelling property and nature and is a symbol of such nature. In the physical world, the external form is an unvarying index of the inward cause or law, but in the human world the element of the will is added, and through its corruption the symbols that man set up often become separated from the truth signified. A king, for instance, is a colossal symbol of power, as the crown and sceptre are symbols of the office, but the power itself is a symbol of wisdom and virtue, since from these alone proceed the right and authority to pronounce judgment and to reward and punish. A fool or a madman, though wearing the robe and holding the sword of justice, is a monstrous perversion of regal authority, while a king without power is a symbol without meaning. So too with wealth and possessions: they are the results and representatives of knowledge and virtue, and in the hands of the wise man are the instruments of beneficence; but when prized only for the sensual gratifications they can confer, or when obtained by violence or fraud, the symbol is detached from that to which it belongs, although even then it acts so strongly on the imagination that it too often wins the regard which is due only to the moral force of which it is primarily the product.

Most of the Shakespearian plays look at the world at a certain angle, which presents a picture of man in some particular relation, but in *Lear* the representation is one of the world itself taken as a whole; and in order, therefore, to make the theory of the play more apparent, it will be necessary to set forth man's relation to the world or his fellow-men, — a relation that must be expressed in his whole course of life and the principles that govern it. The conceptions that make up the theory of a play are arrived at by a development of the literary "form" on which the play is founded, and this in the case of *Lear* is that of a fable, the chief end and purpose of which is to impart a knowledge of the world by symbols; consequently, in a world developed from the "form" of a fable, in which men and women are symbols with an inward meaning, the knowledge of men is the chief end of life, in the pursuit of which inquiry and observation are used as means, and out of these grows up Philosophy. These conceptions are embodied

in the characters and incidents which, in this tragedy, are in the highest degree picturesque and interesting, yet when disembodied, so to speak, and stated baldly as abstract propositions, are exceedingly trite and familiar. Consequently, the main heads of the scheme of the piece only will be touched upon, and that with as much brevity as is consistent with clearness.

The relation of man to the world is necessarily twofold, being both to the phenomenal and to the real world or to the world of sense and the world of soul, the duality of nature being emphasized by the union of body and soul in man himself. By his bodily wants and instincts and his sensual desires he is allied to external nature and the lower orders of animals, but by the possession of a soul comprising faculties mental and spiritual, he is raised to a higher and nobler nature, a Human nature, and is made participant of that Truth which is the soul and regulative principle of the world, and of which the phenomenal world is but the symbol and shadow. The distinctive human faculty is the reason which regulates the sympathies and affections by which men are bound up into one brotherhood under the law of love and a common Humanity. To the reason man owes his prerogative of goodness as, on the other hand, to the overthrow of reason by his lower nature is due his preëminence in wickedness. On its speculative side, reason is the organ of knowledge, and by tracing causes and consequences, attains that knowledge of the laws of nature which is called prudence, or providence, through which means are adapted to ends and a course of life rightly directed. The highest form of prudence is Wisdom, which comprises a knowledge of moral as well as of physical causes, and which, in addition to rightly adapting means to ends, implies also that insight into the true qualities and values of things which leads to the selection of right ends and the consequent pursuance of a right course of action. These laws of nature, when discovered and formulated, become precepts or rules which are laid down for the conduct of life, and a knowledge of them qualifies a man for the exercise of authority, the essence of which is to prescribe a rule and enforce it by rewards and penalties. These rules, moreover, the wise man obeys as well as teaches, and he, therefore, is the true king. To know the truth and to practice it in its various forms of justice, love, and purity is to live after the law of human kind, to live rationally; it is to *be a man*, or, as the ancient moralists had it, to live consistently with nature.

And as Bacon declares it to be the end of Natural Philosophy to build in the understanding an exemplar of the universe or great world, so in like manner is it the end of the study of Human Nature to build in the mind a model of the little world, man; and this, so far as it is attained, is called "a knowledge of the world."

Though placed at the summit of the scale, man is still a component part of the great whole, one rank in the scheme of the world, the order of which is disturbed as soon as any of its parts cease to act according to its law of kind. The law of human kind is, in one word, Humanity, which, when man violates, he drops into his lower nature and becomes *in-human*.

It is the office of the reason, by the laws which it discovers, to regulate the will and affections, and by "affections" in Shakespearian language is signified any state of mind or body produced by whatever cause, and includes as well the sensual desires and appetites as the moral feelings, and thus comprises all possible motives that can act upon the will. These affections are excited by the shows and appearances of the world, which are the signs of the inward qualities and modes of action of the objects around us, and which as they give pleasure or pain excite correspondent feelings of love or hate. Man instinctively seeks good and avoids evil; he hopes for the one and fears the other, and on this hope and fear rests the efficacy of rewards and punishments. In the physical world, under the law of cause and effect, all objects, so far as they come within the sphere of one another's influence, act and react according to their respective affinities and repulsions, and out of this amity and strife arise all the varied phenomena of nature, and out of it, too, spring those benefits and injuries which reward and punish, so far as man is concerned, the proper or improper use of such objects, or what is the same thing, the observance or neglect of natural law. Nature thus makes man wise and obedient by chastising his errors. In Gloster's phrase he "is scourged by the sequent effects," or, as Regan more pointedly says, —

"To willful men  
The injuries that they themselves procure  
Must be their schoolmasters."

But the phenomena which in this world of appearance touch us most closely are the looks, words, and actions of our fellow-



creatures, as being the outward signs and symbols of their inward thoughts and feelings. And in illustrating this truth, *Lear* bears some resemblance to *Cymbeline*, with this difference, however, that whereas in *Cymbeline* the natures of men are judged of in order to determine their place in the scale of men, in *Lear* their dispositions are inquired into with a view of determining their place in the scale of nature, or whether they are characterized by humanity or inhumanity, and more particularly whether they are affected towards ourselves with love or hate, are friends or foes, are disposed to benefit or injure us. And just as we determine these points are our own feelings swayed to friendship or enmity. For the law of action and reaction is as fatal in the moral as in the physical world, although by reason of the corrupt heart and erring judgment of man, its working is subject to manifold complications, and is, therefore, less readily discernible. In this sphere, this law is called *retribution*, taken in its broadest sense of a return of good and evil. And although some men are so base as to repay good with evil, and others so noble as to repay evil with good, the law of direct retaliation as a general rule prevails; love begets love, hate, hate; causing rewards and punishments to be dispensed to a very great extent by the reciprocal play of human feeling, taking form in a return of good or evil; love and beneficence awakening gratitude and a desire to recompense the benefactor; and when other means fail, expressing itself at least verbally in praises, prayers, blessings, good wishes; as, on the other hand, malice and injustice arouse resentment and a spirit of revenge, which, if not resorting to deeds, break forth in curses and maledictions. And these feelings, which thus prompt to actions that deeply affect the lives and fortunes of men, and make up the web and tissue of human affairs, spread as the circles of society enlarge from private friends and enemies to the parties and factions of the State, which as they chance to rise in turn one over the other, bestow rewards upon friends and punishment upon enemies; as Albany says after the battle, —

“All friends shall taste the wages of their virtue,  
And all foes the cup of their deserving.”

Nor is the disposition to reward and punish confined to those who are immediately interested; the moral sentiments of men leading them to approve of good deeds and avenge bad ones,

even in cases of persons unknown or known to be enemies. Our sympathies, however, greatly darken the judgment and pervert the sense of justice, as is often seen in partisan zeal, which so seldom finds any good in an adversary or wrong-doing in a friend. This is amusingly illustrated in the play. Lear's servant Caius (Kent) meets Goneril's steward, and at once quarrels with him : " Draw, you rascal. You came with letters against the king, and *take Vanity, the puppet's part against the royalty of her father,*" etc. Cornwall, the head of the faction which the steward follows, inquires into the cause of the disturbance, which Kent places on personal grounds, but the steward more adroitly lays it to the account of Kent's following the King's party, when Cornwall at once rewards Kent's zeal by setting him in the stocks.

The business of life is the pursuit of ends, and a course of life is characterized as good or bad by the nature of its ends and of the means used to attain them. Success depends upon prudence, or fortune, or both : prudence is the knowledge of causes (of which the most important are the desires and wills of men), and the consequent ability to adapt means to ends, whilst Fortune is but a name for the working of Nature on a scale immeasurable to human eyes, and affecting the lives and affairs of men through causes unexpected or wholly unknown. Fortune, therefore, is ignorance of causes ; and in proportion as man obtains knowledge of nature's laws, he becomes independent of Fortune, even in worldly matters. The profoundest wisdom, however, is of but little avail to guard against the infinite chances of life, from which circumstance it is necessarily inferable — and the conclusion seems in some measure to reconcile the inequalities of fortune to our sense of justice, — that retribution of moral good and evil is not meted out in the world of sense but in the world of soul, and that goodness, whatever its worldly fortune may be, is rewarded with that peace which is in itself a heaven, and wickedness, however prosperous, is punished by those terrors which are in themselves a hell, or, as Bacon broadly puts it, that men in the pursuit of fortune ought to set before their eyes not only that general map of the world "that all things are vanity and vexation of spirit," but also that more particular chart, namely, "that being without well-being is a curse, and the greater the being the greater the curse," and "that all virtue is most rewarded and all wickedness most punished in itself." As the poet excellently says : —



"Quae vobis, quae digna, viri, pro laudibus istis  
 Praemia posse rear solvi? pulcherrima primum  
 Dii moresque dabunt vestri;"<sup>1</sup>

and so, on the other hand, it is no less truly said of the wicked, "His own manners will be his punishment." De Aug. Book VIII. ch. ii.

But since the mass of mankind judge by the event which is an object of the sense, while few have the penetration to read the secrets of the soul, Fortune seems to govern the world irrespective of the merits or demerits of those she raises or overthrows, and produces a scene of moral confusion so inexplicable that we are fain to call it "the mystery of things" and the inscrutable ways of Providence.

The riddle of the world, however, perplexing as it is felt to be, avails not to impair the natural faith that the course of events is guided by Supreme Wisdom, and that an eternal Equity balances all accounts in the long run. The very pillars of the world must, of necessity, rest on justice. If there were a cranny or a crevice in the universe where error could find permanent lodgment and wrong accumulate, the crack would widen until all order were destroyed and the world rent asunder. It can, therefore, never come to pass that the success of evil can be more than temporary, for action and reaction are sure to adjust the account to an exactitude that cannot possibly admit of variation. In the nature of things, action and reaction must be mathematically equal, and the equipoise does not vary by so much even as the weight of the dust of the balance.

Yet in spite of the conviction that justice reigns, *self-love* prompts men to attribute their misfortunes to any influence rather than to their own conduct. "This is the excellent foppery of the world," says that keen reader of men, Edmund, "that when we are *sick in fortune* (often *the surfeit of our own behavior*) we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars." Dire calamities rush forth, like dark and secret fates, to overwhelm their victims, and men are struck down by afflictions which seem so unmerited that in their impatience they cry out with Gloster, —

<sup>1</sup> "You brave young men, what equal gifts can we  
 In recompense of such desert decree?  
 The greatest score and best you can receive  
 The gods and your own conscious worth will give."



"Like flies to wanton boys are we to the Gods ;  
They kill us for their sport ;"

but were it possible to attain such a height of knowledge as to look over the whole web of affairs, we should of necessity see that in a world locked up in a chain of cause and effect the ground for these occurrences had been prepared beforehand. And, after all, these discrepancies between the human and divine judgments — these cases of the "*Dis aliter visum*" — are exceptional. The mass of mankind are in condition, so far as their happiness, perhaps so far as their welfare is concerned, exactly what they make themselves. Fortune lies hid in character; the miser will be rich, the prodigal poor, and one difficulty in piercing to the truth that underlies the moral confusion of the world arises from the complex results growing out of the mingling of good and bad qualities in the same character. The rogue who brings skill and industry to the accomplishment of his designs is likely to succeed however bad his intent, while the careless or ignorant man of probity is as likely to fail. Nature's laws never relax; with them a breach is necessarily attended with a penalty; wisdom and goodness practiced for a lifetime will not exempt from punishment for a single error; and a life, as it is good or bad, is recompensed in its results. This is especially marked in age, when the habit of acting from a particular set of motives has become indurated into a type of character, — as Lear, for instance, who exhibits the pernicious effects of a long life of arbitrary power. Lear stands for a *course of life*, for the habits of fourscore years, — and his age, therefore, is an important element in the character. As Coleridge says, "In Lear, old age is made a character."

The inexorable law that profligacy will entail misery and poverty is exhibited in the model of "poor Tom." "What hast thou been?" asks Lear of the naked, shivering beggar.

"*Edgar.* A serving-man (*i. e.* a lover), proud in heart and mind; that curld my hair, wore gloves in my cap, served the lust of my mistress' heart, . . . swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven. One that slept in the contriving lust, and waked to do it. Wine loved I deeply, dice dearly, and in woman out-paramoured the Turk," etc.

The instinctive feeling that condign punishment will surely tread upon the heels of great wickedness breaks out in the re-

marks of Cornwall's servants after the horrible atrocity perpetrated by him and Regan upon Gloster.

"1 *Serv.* I'll never care what wickedness I do  
If this man come to good.

2 *Serv.* If she live long,  
And, in the end, meet the old course of death,  
Women will all turn monsters."

Retribution is thus inherent in every act. Sometimes the counterblow is speedy; sometimes years elapse before the act as cause reappears in the penalty as effect. Of the latter a notable instance is furnished by the punishment of Gloster's youthful sensuality by the loss in his old age of his eyes through the treachery of Edmund, — the fruit of his early license. This, to the careless observer, would seem to be a stroke of Fortune, but the poet draws aside the veil that so often hides from our eyes the remote causes of these dark judgments, and tells us (in Edgar's remark to Edmund), —

"The Gods are just and of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to plague us.  
*The dark and vicious place where thee he got  
Cost him his eyes."*

Of the former, an example is given in the death of Cornwall, who, in the pride of absolute power, dreams that he can commit injustice with impunity. Intending to wreak vengeance upon Gloster, he says to Regan: —

"Tho' well we may not pass upon his life  
*Without the form of justice, yet our power  
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath, which man  
May blame, but not control."*

He thereupon pinions Gloster and tears out his eyes, but so flagrant a violation of humanity arouses the natural indignation of one of his own servants, who bids him hold; Cornwall rushes upon him to slay him, but in so doing receives from the manly peasant a mortal wound. This speedy punishment, brought about by Nature's laws, elicits from Albany a recognition of the divine government that works by retributive reaction: —

"This shows you are above  
Yon justicers, that *these our nether crimes  
So speedily can venge."*

That which chiefly concerns us in life is life itself. For the preservation of life in the individual and the race, nature has implanted in man passions so imperious as to require the strongest restraints of reason to keep them from filling society with disorder. In nothing does the animal so easily gain an ascendancy over the spiritual as in the passion of love; and its degrading influence is made the subject of Lear's bitterest invective when in his madness he pours out his knowledge of the world's corruption. In the worldly, the love of life is the strongest of motives, length of days the most earnest of prayers.

"O our lives' sweetness !

That we the pain of death would hourly bear  
Rather than die at once."

But the wise man deems that the only true life is the life of the soul, to which that of the body is subordinate and merely instrumental. He knows that the duties of life are preferable to life itself; that truth which comprehends all goodness and without which the soul is dead is infinitely more valuable than a few short years of precarious enjoyment, and holds his earthly existence cheap in comparison with duty. The patriot, the hero, and the martyr — all "who greatly think and bravely die" — point us to the true estimate of life. So Kent, being threatened with death by the king, says: —

*"My life I never held but as a pawn  
To wage against thine enemies ; nor fear to lose it,  
Thy safety being the motive."*

This contempt of death at the call of duty is a true loyalty to man's higher nature, and not even the basest and most worldly love of life and its pleasures can blind us to its beauty.

Trust and treachery play great parts in the world's intercourse, and they are correspondingly conspicuous in the microcosm presented by this tragedy. Truth of soul so strongly exemplified in Kent's fearless discharge of duty is the source of all trust between man and man. Without it, society could not hold together a single day. A violation of it in any of its forms entails the deepest disgrace. A breach of trust in business matters is utterly disreputable; a breach of one's word is the greatest dishonor; while in matters of affection between individuals treachery is considered the basest of villainies, as treason towards one's country is the



blackest of crimes. The closer the tie the deeper the trust, and consequently the baser the breach of it. Domestic treason, therefore, as of the child towards the father, or of friend to friend, shocks the sentiments of mankind. This want of truth, this treachery or diabolism, — for it is the characteristic of the devil, who negatives all that is positive and good, — is perhaps the most marked feature in this grand picture of the world's hollowness and ceaseless conflict of truth and falsehood.

The one great end of life, common to all men, is Happiness, to which all other ends are subordinate. These last fall into two great classes, just as a course of life is directed towards realities and goods of the soul, or towards mere symbols or things of the sense. It is the old story of the two paths of life, leading respectively to virtue and to vice, and illustrated by many an allegory and emblem in both ancient and modern times — such as the tablet of Cebes, the choice of Hercules, the Y of Pythagoras, the Flower and the Leaf, the two Apprentices, and scores of others; it is the teaching of philosophy which directs us to seek wisdom and disdain riches; it is the mandate of religion which enjoins holiness and forbids undue indulgence of the sense. The tragedy of Lear is a version of the same allegory, drawn with Shakespearian breadth and profundity. It teaches that if a course of life is obedient to nature's laws and keeps in view wisdom and goodness, which are the proper pursuit of a rational being, and which prescribe love and the brotherhood of the race as human duties, it will secure peace and happiness, be raised above chance and misfortune, and be touched with something of angelic light, as is seen in the character of Cordelia; but if, on the other hand, the course pursued aim only at the ends offered by the world of sense — such as wealth, power, rank, pleasure, and the like — which are symbols only, valid so long as the substance and the symbol accord, but otherwise empty and vain, then life will be subject to all the blows of Fortune and liable to end in disappointment and misery; and in cases where this spirit of worldliness is carried to the extreme, the character will be deformed by a wickedness utterly fiendish, as we see typified in Goneril and Regan.

The two classes of motives which determine these courses are summed up by Cordelia in a distich with which she justifies her conduct in landing an army on her native land to protect her father: —

“ No *blown ambition* does our arms incite,  
But *love, dear love*, and our aged father’s right.”

By these two different paths of life, one of virtue, the other of worldliness, are fostered two opposite affections, both rooted in Self-Love, the fundamental principle of human nature, which under the government of the reason leads to the love of others and acts of beneficence, but which, when merely a love of self, is utterly heartless and devoid of humanity. This last has its intensest forms in Sensuality and Pride, both of which violate in the highest degree the essential humanity of man: sensuality springing out of the animal appetites, unspiritualized by the soul, and pride out of the sense of superiority derived from the possession of riches, rank, power, and other external advantages, more often the gifts of Fortune than the reward of merit.

Between love and pride there is a direct antagonism, a polarity, which presents in extreme contrast the divine and the demoniac sides of human nature, and which, recognized as it is by all true morality as the result of man’s fallen condition, necessarily lies at the bottom of the profoundest principles of character. In fact this tragedy implies the paradise this world might become through love by exhibiting the hell that it is made by hate. Taking for illustration the dual world of soul and sense as viewed in the microcosm, man, who, if obedient to nature’s laws, partakes of nature’s order and is exalted and spiritualized by love, truth, justice, and purity, but who if dissevered from nature’s order, becomes the slave of sense and passion and the source of all jar and discord, it sweeps through the whole circle of man’s moral nature; yet the grandest picture it presents is one of pride of heart, which overbearing the reason, centres all love in self; being utterly regardless of the affections of others, except so far as they administer to the cravings of its own vanity. This passion is the vilest and the wickedest of any that debase human nature. It is the scourge of social man. Utterly unsympathetic and loveless, it tends solely to division and isolation, and is of the very essence of caste. It creates and perpetuates artificial ranks and classes, separating society into various kinds, not according to natural differences, but according to varying conditions of life, and bestows consideration only upon that which has no moral weight whatever. Between the rich and the poor, it opens a chasm almost as wide as that between man and the brute crea-



tion. Indifferent to intrinsic worth, it plumes itself upon outward display alone, holding in higher regard the attire than the wearer, the attribute than the substance, the symbol than the thing signified, and bows to nothing but superiority of worldly condition. Its votaries see in each other the image of their own pride, and this is the only bond of sympathy between them. Though wearing sometimes the mask of benevolence, yet of real charity — a word that implies the law of love and the brotherhood of the race — it knows nothing. State, style, equipage, parade, form, exclusiveness, — in all these it hedges itself from profane approach, and is gracious to inferiors only when they pay their court with deference and flattery. Though most conspicuous in the high, it is confined to no class, but pervades all ranks and even in the lowest circles spreads heart-burning and strife through the pretensions of some to a standing superior to that of their fellows. Above all, it is the curse of families; it despises and abhors poor relations; it rends asunder the closest ties, severing parent from child and brother from brother, and has lain at the bottom of family ruptures since the days of the first fratricide. This is the passion — the fountain-head of what most shocks us in domestic annals and the source of what is most monstrous and unnatural in human character — which is brought forward in this play as the great disturbing force in the life of man and the harmony of Nature.

The closest tie that binds man to nature is that of parent and child. This tie, which blood coöperates with duty to strengthen and preserve, is a direct form of the order of nature both in the physical and spiritual worlds, for it is a type of the law of physical cause and effect. As Bacon says, “The cause is as the *parent* of the effect, and it is a familiar and almost continual form of speech to denote *cause and effect* as *parent and child* ;”<sup>1</sup> and on the spiritual side its reciprocal rights and duties exemplify in the intensest form the law of human love and the great rule of justice or exact exchange of equivalents. This rule is thus stated by Cordelia: —

“I love you

According to my bond, *nor more nor less* :

You have *begot me, bred me, lov'd me*, I

*Return those duties back as are right fit* ;

*Obey you, love you and most honour you.*”

<sup>1</sup> Bacon's Works, *De Principiis*, vol. x. p. 344.



This relation, therefore, is a type of government, a pattern of *authority and obedience*, and therefore representative of all those correlations which involve to a greater or less degree the same principle, as king and subject, husband and wife, master and servant, patron and client, landlord and tenant (in the feudal sense), and the play introduces also the relation of host and guest. The family then, with its enduring love and duties and its natural obedience and subordination, is the fundamental form of social organization, and the principles that hold together the fabric of the state are but an extension in a widening circle of those feelings that have their centre and focus in the domestic relations.

The authority of the parent is absolute and rests solely on the will, and like all authority, divine and human, is enforced by rewards and penalties. The exercise of this authority must be governed by justice, and justice must be dispensed by Wisdom, which alone can determine with exactitude the reward or punishment commensurate with the merit or offense. It must be consonant with the Eternal Equity, or exact exchange of equivalents that reigns throughout nature. No human reason, however, ever attained this perfection. Both love and hate interfere to sway our judgments, to say nothing of the profound ignorance of the truth we are often under with regard to the motives that lead to the action we consider. These causes inevitably produce an *inequality* or *want of equity*, by prompting us to return *more or less* of pleasure or pain than the particular case or person may deserve. It is, therefore, incumbent on all men, and particularly on those who exercise authority, to learn the truth by examining and searching into the causes of actions, to look at the intent as well as the act, to avoid all haste and rashness, and thus apportion rewards and penalties according to desert.

To obtain the wisdom requisite to guide the judgment, there is needed a twofold knowledge of man, that is, of the ideal and of the actual man, the first of which consists of a knowledge of those laws of man's being which prescribe his duties in all conditions and relations of life, and which constitute the moral code or a knowledge of man *as he ought to be*, or in other words, moral philosophy; and also that other knowledge of men, *as they actually are*, which last is more particularly called "the knowledge of the world." This latter is derived from an actual experience of men, and especially of those deceits and pretenses—those

“cautels and impostures and evil acts,” as Bacon has it — under which they hide their purposes, vices, follies, crimes, and wickedness, which, like the secrets of external nature, are only to be discovered by long trial and observation. Out of this knowledge grow the Arts of Policy.

This is the building of a model of the microcosm in the mind, and this acquaintance with mankind enables its possessor to discern between the symbol and the reality, that is, to detect the true intentions of others, to see the true causes of their conduct and thus discriminate between the sincere and the false, and place a just estimate upon their words and acts. It is only this practical knowledge of men that will counteract the flattery of a Goneril or the devilish machinations of an Edmund.

But the body, notwithstanding its inferiority to the soul, has demands which are imperative on both saint and sinner. Provision must be made for our animal wants, for Nature, who is called our kindly mother, and who, on her poetic side, so feeds our minds with beauty (when our bodies are at ease), is, in her prosaic and practical aspect utterly pitiless, and will freeze, starve, or otherwise destroy us, unless we protect ourselves against her savage forces. Food, raiment, and shelter are indispensable; hence the eagerness to acquire worldly possessions, mere barriers in the first instance against the extremity of the skies and the ills of poverty. Owing to the differences among men, great inequalities of condition arise, a few growing rich and powerful, while the mass become to a greater or less extent dependent on their “betters,” — a word denoting originally a higher degree of goodness, but quickly and permanently transferred to superiority of fortune. All beyond necessary use is superfluity; in the language of the play, it is “*addition*” to the man. So long, however, as this superfluity or “adjunct,” as Bacon calls it, is in the hands of the wise and just, this inequality is corrected, the wise man holding his riches in trust and as the means of diffusing comfort and happiness. A sense of brotherhood equalizes all differences and each man has enough. It is the doctrine of the play that human love, the direct opposite of an inhuman pride, should lead the strong to protect the weak and aid them in their struggles with the pitiless forces of nature.

“Heavens deal so still;

Let the *superfluous* and *lust dieted* man



*That slaves your ordinance, that will not see  
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly ;  
So distribution should undo excess  
And each man have enough."*

And so emphasized is this sentiment that it is repeated in another passage.

But riches, instead of promoting charity, swell the heart with pride and convert the love of the world, the human world, into a calculating and cold-hearted worldliness, which so far from commiserating the poor and unfortunate, holds them in disdain and tramples them under foot. Thus man degrades the high faculties that constitute his specific human kind and degenerates into inhumanity.

But inasmuch as the love that others have for us is the measure of the value they set upon us, the man of pride, though wholly heartless, is flattered by nothing so much as by professions of love and admiration. Such professions are primarily due to wisdom and goodness, of which wealth and rank are outward symbols, so that when these symbols are separated from the things they signify, they draw after them the homage that is due only to the reality ; and so dear to the heart of man is this esteem, which seems to be a tribute to his own superiority, that the struggle for riches and power fills the world with every species of rapine, cruelty, and wrong.

Were it not for the respect and consideration that follow after wealth and station, avarice and ambition would die out of the human heart. This trait of human nature is thus cynically hit off by Rousseau : " If," says he, " we behold a handful of rich and powerful men seated on the pinnacle of fortune and greatness, while the crowd gropes in obscurity and want, it is merely because the first prize what they enjoy but in the same degree that others want it, and that without changing their condition they would cease to be happy the moment the people ceased to be miserable."

The sycophancy of the world, however, is quite equal to the demands made upon it. The great and powerful are always attended by troops of followers, who are loud in their professions of attachment and whose adulation so "infuses with self and vain conceit" that instances are not infrequent where men have been so blind in judgment and lost to self-knowledge that they



have imagined themselves more than mortal and have aped the style of the Gods. Lear is brought by flattery almost up to this point, but, like Canute, he seems to have put his courtiers to the proof. "They flattered me like a dog," he says, but adds, "When the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not cease at my bidding, then I found them, then I smelt them out."

The speediest cure for man thus degenerate is to deprive him of the factitious advantages out of which grows his pride of heart; and these, as they are given by Fortune, may at any time by a turn of her wheel be taken away. Strip the proud man of his symbols, of his wealth, position, equipage, fine apparel, and the respect which in a world of false appearance follows these; subject him to the realities of want, disease, neglect; leave him to war with Nature, who will not suffer any departure from the law of kind, and he will soon recognize the value of human pity, soon feel the wickedness of his disloyalty to his distinctive human nature. This is the process that is wrought out with the highest poetical sublimity and the most powerful dramatic effect in the case of Lear.

And here in passing may be remarked the poet's consummate mastery of his materials and the symmetry he preserves in the handling of his subject. Whatever story he selects for a plot, he is, by his manner of working, under no necessity of departing from those incidents in it which give it popularity, but makes it as complete a vehicle of his organic idea as though it were wholly his own invention. He is always fortunate in his selection; his dice are always loaded. The original story of Lear is one of a pagan king in a barbarous and superstitious age. This feature he seizes upon as furnishing a background in perfect keeping with his design, which being a representation of man in his relation to the world or Nature, to whose laws of kind he is subject, logically requires that Nature should be the power to whose punishments for the infraction of such laws man is amenable. And, therefore, although to give some mythological color to his mythical play mention is made of Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, and other deities, yet these are not the gods appealed to by Lear when he curses his child or when he cries for justice, but his deities then are the impersonations of the blind forces of Nature — vague, unknown divinities identified with the material heavens themselves — pow-

ers who wield the thunder and the storm, and who chasten men's pride and sensuality by the physical pain and suffering these vices entail. Retributive justice is effected through natural law and material agencies — the allies of still more cruel elements in human character — through which man being humiliated and "made to feel what wretches feel" is brought to a sense of *shame* of his own cruelty and arrogance. For the dreadful deeds depicted are not regarded so much as offenses against Heaven, or as crimes against the State, as outrages upon Nature and Humanity, and therefore it is not so much remorse, as in *Hamlet*, or fear, as in *Macbeth*, as shame, the castigator of pride and sensuality, that is the avenger in this scheme of retribution.

Thus Lear, when brought to his right mind and a sense of his inhumanity to Cordelia, will by no means yield to see his daughter.

"A sovereign shame so elbows him. His own unkindness  
That stripp'd her from his benediction, etc.  
    . . . These things sting  
His mind so venomously that burning shame  
Detains him from Cordelia."

It has been pointed out that *Lear* is founded on a fable that is an image of the world and that this idea is carried through the play, which therefore itself becomes an image of the world, some features of which have been set forth in the preceding remarks. These were arrived at by resolving the characters into the various conceptions, of which they are the embodiments; wherefore to test the analysis, the conceptions will be carried back and shown to be the bases of the characters. In fact, it will appear that the characters are symbols of the more prominent traits in the moral constitution of the world — and therefore the whole play is a development of "the form" of a fable that conveys a knowledge of the world by symbols.

The most conspicuous figure in the play is, of course, King Lear, and his nature furnishes the arena on which affection and pride, with their allied virtues and vices, struggle with alternate success for mastery. An absolute monarch, he has for a lifetime enjoyed the greatest possible preëminence of condition, and the incessant homage that has been paid him has rendered him willful, cholerick, tyrannical, and exacting. He mistakes the greatness of his fortune for a personal superiority, and is a type on a magnifi-



cent scale of the pride engendered of prosperity and pampered by flattery. So accustomed is he to adulation that he can find in the quiet assurances of truthful love or the plain speaking of honest advice only tokens of coldness of heart and insolence of manners; and so blinded has he become to the true values of things that he prizes more highly the pomp than he does the power of his place. All these infirmities of character are increased by senility. "He exhibits," says Goneril, who knows him well, "not only the *infirmities of long engrafted condition*, but therewithal the *unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them*." Still his nature, though warped by the pernicious influences of his station, has in it depths of affection that well over with bounty and kindness towards those who are dear to him; and in order to secure his children's love as well as to relieve his age of the burthens of state, he proposes to divide his kingdom among them, and ever after dependent upon their gratitude to live with them by turns, retaining only a retinue of knights, together with "*the name and all additions of a king*." This retention of the empty title after parting with the substance of royalty lets us know from the start how much he overvalues the factitious dignity of his office. To yield up the kingdom and "all the large effects that troop with majesty" costs him no effort, as his habitual sense of supremacy prevents his anticipating any diminution of personal consequence on that account; but his pride clings tenaciously to the trappings and outward symbols of his greatness. In like manner, pride intermingles with his warmest affections. The love that manifests itself in deeds does not satisfy his heart; he must be gratified with the outward and emphatic utterance of it in words also. To this end, he devises the test of his children's affection, not that he doubts their love, but he craves the flattery of hearing it publicly proclaimed. Morally blind to the fact that love is not love unless spontaneous, and that it never can be tempted to blazon itself in words for a material reward, he promises the largest share of the kingdom to that one of his daughters who shall be loudest in protestations of attachment. And in this, he again shows his preference of the symbol to the reality. His contrivance is but a bribe to insincerity, and ends necessarily in a disappointment, for Cordelia, from whom he expects most, but who will not heave



"Her heart into her mouth, but loves his majesty  
According to her bond, nor more nor less,"

declines to say anything. This refusal on her part and the consequent defeat of his project are construed by him as a slight of his affection and a disdain of his bounty, and he instantly blazes with wrath. Though "he loves her most," though she is

"The argument of his praise, balm of his age  
The best, the dearest,"

though he has intended "to set his rest on her kind nursery," still all this avails nothing to check or soothe his rage; his offended pride snaps asunder at once this strongest tie of his heart. And so closely does pride lie to what is inhuman in man's nature that we see in this representative character that a passionate love is turned on the instant into a passionate hate, and with all contempt and contumely he casts off his child forever. And to add solemnity to the act, he calls to witness its irrevocability the deities that in a pagan age embody the unknown and mysterious forces of Nature, — forces which in the end are to be the instruments to punish this most flagrant breach of Nature's laws.

"*Lear.* So young and so untender ?

*Cor.* So young, my lord, and true.

*Lear.* Let it be so. *Thy truth then be thy dower.*

For by the sacred radiance of the sun,

The mysteries of Hecate, and the night,

By all the operations of the orbs

From whom we do exist, and cease to be,

Here I disclaim all my paternal care,

Propinquity and property of blood,

And as a stranger to my heart and me

Hold thee from this forever."

And still further to give significance to the cruelty of this disclaimer, the poet in writing this fable, in which he intends to make his characters symbols of the dominant principles of human society, causes the enraged father in his pride to avow as strong a sympathy with "the Scythian" and the cannibal, types of the extreme of inhumanity, as with his true-hearted child.

"The barbarous Scythian,  
And he who makes his generation messes  
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom  
Be as well neighbor'd, pitied, and reliev'd  
As thou, my sometime daughter."

And even not yet content, the implacable poet, in order to mark still more strongly the inhumanity of pride, adds another most powerful touch to the portrait, making Lear exclaim to Kent, who offers to interpose : —

“Peace, Kent,  
Come not between the DRAGON and his wrath.

So be *my grave my peace* as here I give  
Her father’s heart from her.”

Thus at the very opening of the play the leading personage, whose fortunes are to furnish the chief subject of interest to this dramatic myth, is put before us with his vices of character painted in the highest coloring in order to make more conspicuous the reaction which this excess produces ; and throughout the play we shall find the mythical and the dramatic blended, — the one by extravagance tending to give a fabulous cast to both character and incident, which tendency the other modifies and reconciles us to by the impetuous tide of natural feeling which is made to animate these figures. And this has a further artistic effect in rendering the piece a picture of the violent deeds and passions of a barbarous age.

It may be added with regard to the character of Lear, that it is evidently drawn as a model, in which as in a diagram we see the predominance of worldly pride over love pushed to the extreme, not by the use of superlatives and hyperboles, such as we find in *The Winter’s Tale*, in order to idealize the characters, but by the use of the strongest symbols and figures to typify the truth put before us.

The passage last quoted is a good example of the poet’s manner of foreshadowing, in the early scenes, the catastrophe of the play, and of causing his characters to pass sentence upon their errors out of their own mouths. When Lear, in his pride of heart, likens himself, for fierceness and power, to “a dragon,” he unconsciously typifies his own inhumanity, as he also speaks his own doom, when he utters the arrogant imprecation, “*So be my grave my peace* as here I give her father’s heart from her.”

Filled as the play is with atrocities, hideous as is the ingratitude of Regan and Goneril, there is no violation of the law of kind in any succeeding scene more shocking than this disruption of the natural tie between Lear and his devoted child.

With a fatal rashness he divides the whole kingdom between Goneril and Regan, and merely stipulating for a reservation of a hundred knights to maintain the dignity of his titular kingship, he gives the reality, "the sway, revenue, execution of the rest," to his sons-in-law, which to confirm he hands to them his crown, the symbol of sovereignty.

Cordelia, "the precious unprized maid," disinherited by her father, "dowered with his curse and strangered with his oath," finds a lover and a husband in the most illustrious of her suitors, the king of France, whose moral insight detects the truth and surpassing loveliness of her character. She departs with him for his country, and Lear is left to find happiness in the affection of Goneril and Regan, whose glozing words have won for them the kingdom. But Goneril and Regan are extremely astute in this world's wisdom. They know the human heart, and they especially know their father, and, having secured the prize, they do not intend that anything shall interfere with their enjoyment of it. Clearly perceiving that Lear's habits of authority as well as his choleric disposition must inevitably lead him to manage those authorities he has given away, and thereby thwart their own supremacy, they at once take steps to deprive him of all consideration. No touch of filial feeling or of gratitude checks their course. They would scoff at such weakness. On the contrary, they abate their "ceremonious affection," instruct their menials to treat him with disrespect, throw his messengers into the stocks, and soon bring about an open rupture. The cover under which they hide their inhuman designs is the alleged debauchery and riotous conduct of his train, which, on this account, they avow a determination to reduce in number, with the secret purpose of stripping him of it altogether. This point of the fable is most skillfully conceived, or at least handled, as the means of developing Lear's pride, and showing how deeply his affections are rooted in what is merely external and factitious. It enables us also to measure arithmetically, as it were, the depth of the wounds and the intensity of the torture that is inflicted upon him; for Lear has entered on a new course of life, and in his old age has been put to school. Just in proportion as his train is reduced does his misery increase, whilst his estimate of his daughters' kindness is based exclusively upon the number of followers either will allow him to retain. When Goneril first cuts down his hundred knights



to fifty, her tone of reprimand and disrespect, the first, perhaps, he had ever heard addressed to him, and his sudden perception of his loss of influence, fill him with so much amazement that he almost doubts his personal identity.

“Does any here know me? Why, this is not Lear.  
 . . . who is it can tell me who I am?”

The Fool pertinently ejaculates, “*Lear’s shadow.*” But the truth flashes upon him, and pouring out the bitterness of his heart in a father’s curse, — which takes the form of a prayer to Nature for retribution (he has only *words* now, terrible ones it is true, but still only words to manifest his displeasure), — he hastens away to Regan for sympathy and aid; but finding that Regan is even more pitiless than her sister, and will allow him but five and twenty followers, he turns again to Goneril and says: —

“I’ll go with thee,  
 Thy *fifty* yet doth *double five* and *twenty*,  
 And *thou art twice her love.*”

Here, again, we see in this representative character how deeply pride has struck its roots into his nature, and that it is this desperate clinging to his train, the last remnant of his royal state and only prop of his pride, that occasions those reactions and alternations of passion, those bursts of rage and cries of lacerated feeling, those fierce imprecations on the one hand and piteous pleadings on the other, which mark how terribly his bosom is convulsed between wounded affection and pride. But pride, of course, carries the day. Rather than submit patiently to be deprived of the accessories of his rank, or purchase personal comfort by giving up all marks of sovereignty, he will

“Abjure all roofs and choose  
 To wage against the enmity o’ the air;  
 To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,  
 Necessity’s sharp pinch.”

And in an agony of mind and unattended save by the Fool, he rushes forth into the night and storm, alike ignorant and reckless of what may betide him. The same vice of character that had prompted his inhuman rejection of Cordelia has proved his scourge and made him an outcast. Isolated from almost all mankind, he is subjected to the sharp teachings of experience, and is

the victim of injustice himself. Heretofore his tyranny had been protected from punishment by power, but now the ban is on his own head, and he is brought to a condition where, stripped of all consequence, he must contend single-handed with Nature, who, —

“ With sheets of fire, with bursts of horrid thunder,  
With groans of roaring wind and rain,”

summons her forces to chastise his arrogance and his infraction of her laws.

The question has been mooted whether Lear suffers more as a king or as a father, that is, whether he is injured more in his pride or his affections. Here we find the principle of reaction or polarity that runs throughout the play woven into the character itself; for it is obvious that his sufferings in both capacities are vastly increased by their mutual reaction. The king is wounded through the father, the father through the king. To be treated with insolence and contempt, to be stripped of all marks of respect, and to be driven forth into the storm, though this treatment were received at the hands of strangers or enemies, would be grievous enough for a monarch grown old in the luxuries and homage of a court to bear; but when this flaying alive of his pride comes from his children, to whom his “frank heart gave all,” and from whom he is entitled to receive the utmost consideration and kindness, his misery must be incalculably increased. So, on the other hand, the ingratitude of his children, though manifested in matters comparatively trifling, would make him heart-sore and wretched, but when their heartlessness is evinced by degrading him in the very point dearest of all others to his pride, it is more than man’s nature can bear, and, in his case, ends in madness. This interaction of pride and affection runs through the whole character. In the mad scenes we have now a burst of indignation as a father, now an assumption of dignity as a king, and sometimes a union of the two feelings as in the imaginary trial of Goneril, whom he arraigns for having “kicked the *poor king, her father.*”

Lear exposed upon the heath to the storm bears up for a while against the raging elements, the energy of his passion rising sublime over the sublimities of Nature, but the contest is an unequal one.

“ Man’s nature cannot carry  
The affliction nor the fear,” —

and the old king is fain to ask his "dreadful summoners grace." Forced back upon his humanity by his physical sufferings, he is led to reflect upon the poor naked wretches everywhere who are exposed to the ills of poverty and the hardships of nature, and forgetting the king in the man he utters by way of prayer these sentiments, instinct with the deepest humanity : —

"Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons such as these? *Oh, I have ta'en  
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;  
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,  
And shew the heavens more just.*"

Act III. Sc. 3.

This is the lesson he has learned, and a vast stride it is in self-knowledge.

While in this mood of mind, he is suddenly confronted with Tom o' Bedlam."

"The basest and most poorest shape  
That ever penury in contempt of man  
Brought near to beast."

The utter wretchedness of this object challenges Lear's attention and gives his wandering mind a point to fix upon. He takes a sudden and wondrous liking for the naked beggar, unable as yet to perceive that his misery can spring from other than moral causes similar to those that occasion his own. And it is curious to observe that in this juxtaposition of the king and the beggar — the two poles of society — the poet is careful to save our sensibilities from too rude a shock at the degradation of the monarch by portraying his conduct as an effect of mental derangement, thus winning our sympathy for his hero through the same class-feeling and social pride of which at the very same moment he is showing the hollowness. The scene is a most impressive tableau which exposes the emptiness of that pride, which, in actual life, most frequently and conspicuously manifests itself in dress, apparel, and equipage. They who array themselves in purple and fine linen shrink from all social contact or familiar intercourse with the peasant or laborer in his homely garb, and the two classes stand apart as if belonging to different spheres of being. The



attire is held to be significant of the standing of the wearer and to some extent a symbol having a moral meaning.

The illustration of this feature of society falls in strictly with the method of the play, which demands a constant exhibition of a regard for the symbol rather than for the thing signified. But the whole of society is epitomized by the king and the beggar, who, comprehending between them all ranks and conditions, enable the poet to extend the application of the law of kind to the human race at large. When Lear first encounters "poor Tom," his mind has been so violently shaken from its settled convictions by the overthrow of his faith in filial piety that he is ready to receive new impressions, however repugnant to his previous mental habits. Time was when he would have looked, as Gloster did, upon the starving Bedlamite as "a fellow" to make him think "a man a worm," but now that he has been invaded to the skin by the pitiless storm and brought to the depths of misery, he discovers with somewhat of surprise that he shares a common nature with the shivering wretch before him. "Oh, I have taken too little care of this," is his sudden confession. He begins to ponder, apparently for the first time, what man is in himself. He gazes at the model then before him and asks, "Is man no more *than this*? Consider *him* well. *Thou* owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume." He sees that apparel is but sophistication, and that the beggar with "his uncovered body" is "*the thing itself*." All else is superfluity. And in order that his practice may not lag behind his theory, he begins to tear off his own garments. "Off, off, you lendings." Under the teachings of this "his philosopher," Lear clearly perceives the emptiness of show, "of silks that make proud the flesh that wear them," and that beneath the rags of the beggar and the robes of the king lies hid the same identical Humanity. The cure of his pride is complete; for, though in the disorder of his mind, he afterwards through force of lifelong habit affects the kingly style, yet he never recants his adherence to the doctrines taught him by his "learned Theban." And at the last, when restored to reason, he recognizes the infinite littleness of pride and no longer reverts to his kingship, his hundred knights, or his loss of station, but though a prisoner in the hands of his enemies, finds perfect peace and happiness in parental affection and his reunion with Cordelia.

His humility and his sense of "the blessedness of being little"

are expressed in the following lines, — which are filled, it will be observed, with the notion of polarity or action and reaction.

“*Cor.* Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters ?

*Lear.* No, no, no, no ! Come, let’s away to prison ;

We two alone will sing like birds i’ the cage ;

When thou dost *ask me blessing*, I’ll kneel down,

And *ask of thee forgiveness* : So we’ll live,

And pray and sing and *tell old tales*, and laugh

At gilded butterflies, and *hear poor rogues*

*Talk of court-news* ; and *we’ll talk with them too*, —

*Who loses*, and *who wins* ; *who’s in*, *who’s out*,

And take upon us the *mystery of things*,

As if we were God’s spies ; and we’ll wear out

In a wall’d prison, packs and sects of great ones

That *ebb and flow* by the moon.”

After Lear has lost his reason, he is without purpose and consequently without interest as a moral agent. A man irresponsible for his conduct and unconscious of his condition may excite our pity, but cannot awaken our moral sentiments ; he is a mere spectacle. But the interest in Lear is maintained through his symbolical character. He is a *king*, and as such is a symbol ; he is a king without power and therefore a symbol without significance ; nay more, he is a king without reason, and therefore the sham of the world. He is, moreover, a pathetic type of the mutability of fortune. These facts are constantly forced upon us. He enters with his crown of noxious weeds, a fitting emblem of factitious dignity and of the vices and passions that attend it. His words are, “No, they cannot touch me for coining, *I am the king himself* ;” and in reply to Gloster’s question, “Is’t not the king ?” he exclaims, “Ay, *every inch a king*,” — and then breaks out into a tirade against the ways of the world, its hypocrisy and corruption, in which he utters truths generalized from his experience as a magistrate and displays a knowledge of men which makes us wonder at his want of wisdom when in his senses. His insanity, though marked by occasional incoherence, stimulates his mind and renews its vigor. And observe how he illustrates by symbols, — “Thou hast seen a farmer’s dog bark at a beggar ? And the creature run from the cur ? There thou mightst see the *great image of authority : a dog’s obeyed in office*.”

“Through tatter’d clothes small vices do appear,  
*Robes and furr’d gowns hide all*,” etc., —

and exclaiming "Come, come, *I am a king*, my masters, know you not that?" he makes his exit, running, a spectacle which draws from a "Gentleman" the comment, —

"A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,  
Past speaking of in a king," —

in which last words more is meant than meets the ear.

The elements of character which are mingled in Lear are distributed among his children, — Regan and Goneril carrying selfishness and pride to a pitch of heartlessness that shocks humanity, while Cordelia on the other hand exalts affection into the highest and holiest form of filial love.

Goneril and Regan, though discriminated by some fine shadings, are stamped so nearly with the same die that they may be considered together as one character. They obviously represent the spirit of worldliness, — a compound of greed, perfidy, pride, love of riches, power, distinction, and personal and sensual gratification. From their pure, unadulterated self-love, one might suppose them destitute of moral perceptions and a moral standard, but on the contrary they clearly perceive moral distinctions but are utterly indifferent to them. In fact, they prefer evil to good and are examples of that obliquity of mind which attends great depravity of heart. Goodness to them is foolishness. When Albany upbraids Goneril with filial ingratitude, she impatiently interrupts what she considers his preaching, and says, "No more, *the text is foolish*;" and when he points to her fiendishness in driving her father mad, and bids her turn her eyes inward on her own deformity, she contemptuously ejaculates, "O vain fool!" Yet the skill they display in working on the moral sentiments of others shows that they appreciate the value which the world sets upon virtue. They are adepts in policy, in flattery, in false pretense. When it suits their purposes, they are full of kind words and courteous manners. For their most atrocious acts they are never at a loss to assign a plausible reason, though at times they disdain to pay even this tribute to virtue.

In the execution of their designs they exhibit great worldly prudence. They know the value of celerity of action. They are distrustful and watchful of every contingency and are always on the alert.

Their love is animal and shameless — like that of tigresses for



their mates. They speak of it openly, they talk of it to their menials, and ask the plainest questions. They are both inflamed by the beauty of the sleek deadly Edmund, who cares for neither, sports with each in turn, and meditates the destruction of both. Their rivalry necessarily leads to one destroying the other. Goneril poisons her sister, but in the very moment of her success she is exposed, Edmund is slain, and she grown desperate takes her own life, — an act which draws from her husband the appropriate comment: —

*"This judgment of the heavens that makes us tremble  
Touches us not with pity."*

They may each be taken as an image or symbol of that spirit that is sometimes called "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

From these patterns of extreme wordliness and wickedness, the mind turns with satisfaction and relief to Cordelia, a model of filial piety. This feeling is wholly practical and manifests itself in conduct. With the highest sense of duty it combines the tenderest love; it is, therefore, marked by willing obedience to rightful authority, and when exalted and spiritualized, as it is found in the love of a daughter for an aged and infirm father, is the purest emotion of the heart. It is wholly disinterested, seeking and craving no reward except from its own exercise and a sense of duty performed, — a duty, however, which is the spontaneous impulse of the soul. Cordelia is an exponent of this high and holy feeling and shows how angelic human nature may become through love and truth.

Cordelia is wholly unworldly; she looks only to the substance and inward truth of things. Her disregard of the things of sense is observable in her reply to Burgundy, who declines her hand for the reason that she has been deprived of her dower. She says: —

*"Peace be with Burgundy.  
Since that respects of fortune are his love,  
I shall not be his wife."*

Being an inward impulse that operates on the will, filial love seldom finds expression in words, but reveals itself in works, still adding deed to deed. And so Cordelia is a doer and not a talker. In her the speechless language by which the body symbolizes the workings of the mind — so fully illustrated as will be

seen throughout the play — becomes acts of highest devotion and self-sacrifice. It is this reality in works and disdain of words — this preference of the substance to the symbol — that gives the character that profound reserve which is sometimes mistaken for coldness and insensibility.

It was a moral impossibility for Cordelia to vie with her sisters in flattery for a portion of the kingdom. She tells her father that she loves him “according to her bond,” the force and compass of which obligation, as she views it, we cannot well estimate until, taught by her subsequent conduct, we are enabled in some degree to measure the depth and strength of her filial love. Deep as is her affection for her father, however, she loves truth more.

“*Lear.* So young and so untender ?

“*Cor.* So young, my lord, and true.”

Unworldly as Cordelia is, she knows the world and easily reads the minds of others. Though what she well intends she will do before she speaks, she is yet aware that there is a glib and oily art to speak and purpose not, in which her sisters are perfect adepts. Her knowledge, however, of the corruption of the world does not taint her mind, nor does a sense of her own goodness infect her with pride. With the utmost humility she says to Kent : —

“O thou good Kent, how shall *I live and work*

*To match thy goodness ! My life will be too short*

*And every measure fail me.”*

Cordelia may be regarded as a household divinity, — not so much one who is worshiped, as one who blesses others, one who hourly puts good thoughts into good works, and thus becomes an earthly type of divine love, an adumbration of that Truth, whose Word is his Deed.

In no point are the antithesis of soul and sense and the separation of the symbol from the inward reality made more frequently manifest than in the sentiment of love. Sensuality, like Pride, pays no regard but to the outward show ; it is attracted by the bloom of beauty alone, and is intent only on physical gratification. Of this error, Gloster is the representative, and in this he resembles the mass of mankind. Morally, there is nothing to distinguish Gloster from the generality ; he is a man of good intentions and amiable disposition, but lax in principle, governed by habit



and impulse; disposed to trim and shuffle under accusation, but courageous enough when cornered to defy his enemies and brave their wrath; intellectually, however, he is a most marked example of a trait of character, which more than any other is common to all men. *Credulity* and the *influence of imagination over the reason*, to which perhaps every man — not excepting the man of the best balanced mind — is in some degree subject, and to which the superstitions and errors of opinion that prevail throughout the world are due, are carried in Gloster as far as they can go, or at least so far as to make the character strongly typical. It is quite in keeping with his animal temperament that he should believe in astrology and planetary influence, and attribute to material agencies effects that can only result from moral causes.

In Gloster's case the great law of cause and consequence as a retributive agency is plainly visible. Out of his sensuality and his disloyalty to the law of kind, Nature raises up an avenger in his illegitimate offspring, Edmund, through whose treachery he is stripped of title and estate, deprived of his eyes, and driven out to die. The unspeakable misery to which he is reduced by this vicissitude of fortune develops his better nature and opens his mental and moral perceptions. He arrives at some degree of self-knowledge and finds that he wants no eyes; "he stumbled when he saw."

In his wanderings he meets with Edgar, who becomes his guide and saves him from suicide and despair by working upon his credulity and making him believe that a miracle has been wrought in his behalf. Upon learning, however, that it was his son Edgar (whom he had before so cruelly wronged) who had thus followed his sad steps, he is not able to support the conflict of feeling, but

"His flaw'd heart,  
 'Twixt two extremes of passion, grief and joy,  
 Burst smilingly."

In Edmund, Pride and Worldliness attain a maximum even through the influence of Shame. An illegitimate son of Gloster, he inherits the love of consideration of his class, but has grown up with the consciousness of being branded with baseness. He hears his father speak of his mother in a tone of the grossest disrespect, and confess that he has often blushed to acknowledge him as a son. Not that he is at all concerned at the dishonor of his parents; he himself makes it the theme of his coarse wit.



Nay more, he cherishes a secret pride in his own base birth, and claims a special excellence from the fierce passion to which he owes his origin. Yet though thus inherently depraved, he is endowed with qualities which inspire him with high self-estimation. A strong will, a keen intellect, and great personal beauty enable him to measure himself against others with a sense of superiority, and he therefore questions the justice of loading him with disgrace, when he is in all respects equal to "honest madam's issue." To be thus condemned without cause confounds moral distinctions in his mind, quenches all sentiments of honor, and develops to the utmost his inherent depravity. The instinctive desire of esteem and of love is smothered in him by the world's scorn, which forces back his sympathies, embittering his spirit and rendering doubly intense his self-love. To his scoffing spirit, the odium attached to illegitimacy rests on no better grounds than the favor that is awarded to primogeniture; both alike are conventional and due to the "plague of custom and the curiosity of nations." Inasmuch then as prejudice unjustly excludes him from social advantages, he makes "Nature his goddess; to *her law* his services are bound;" but this law to which he professes allegiance, so far from being Nature's law of human kind (on which must rest all social and civil order), is one which debases all human ties to animal affinities. He sees clearly enough, however, that opinion must be humored; that the world worships wealth and power, and that "robes and furr'd gowns hide all;" wealth and power, therefore, he is determined at all hazards to have, and find in the world's servility a shield against its injustice. His readiest road to success seems to lie over the ruin of his brother and father—to be effected under circumstances that will devolve the family title and estate upon himself. He says:—

"A credulous father, and a brother noble,  
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,  
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty  
My practices ride easy: I see the business—  
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:  
*All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.*"

The chief characteristic of his mind is *cunning*; he is a master of feigned circumstance and false pretense; and it may be noted that in carrying out his purpose he adopts a device which Bacon, in his Essay on Cunning, mentions as one of the tricks of men of that class, as thus:—

"Some procure themselves to be surprised *at such times as it is like the party they work upon will suddenly come upon them*; and to be found with a letter in their hand, . . . to the end they may be apposed (questioned) of those things which of themselves they are desirous to utter."

So Edmund, having counterfeited a letter of his brother Edgar, puts himself where his father will suddenly come upon him, and says:—

"If this letter speed,  
And my good invention thrive, Edmund the base  
Shall top the legitimate.

Enter GLOSTER.

Glo. . . . Edmund! How now? what news?

Edm. So please your lordship, none.

[Putting up the letter.

Glo. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

Edm. I know no news, my lord.

Glo. What paper were you reading?

Edm. Nothing, my lord.

Glo. No? What needed, then, that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket?" etc., etc.

With much affected reluctance, Edmund gives up the letter, which contains a proposition to put Gloster to death.

By this infamous device, and other base calumnies, he causes Edgar to be driven from his home with a price set upon his head, while his father he consigns to misery worse than death by the most detestable treachery. Gloster, speaking of the eclipses and what they portended, had said: "*Machinations, hollowness, treachery* follow us disquietly to our graves;" and this he finds verified but too truly in his own case, these evils being fully embodied in his son, Edmund. If Edmund has a soul, it is as the devils have one—utterly depraved and loveless. Himself a product of the violation of the law of kind, he is the mainspring of the plot through which such violations in others are punished. Almost every character in the piece is brought to misery or death, directly or indirectly, through his agency. He is not sanguinary but pitiless, and so bent is he on hiding under the glitter of rank the shame of his birth that no villainy is too heinous, no treachery too black, no atrocity too cruel for him to perpetrate. He gains the family title and estate, becoming Duke of Gloster, and having acquired high favor at Court, he opens an intrigue with the two

Queens, who are both enamored of him,—not that he prizes their love, for he is too spiritually fiendish to care for sensual vices, but in order that he may use them as stepping stones to supreme power. All goes swimmingly with him for a time, and he seems to be the very figure and pattern of a successful villain, but at last retribution overtakes him, the wheel comes full circle, and in the hour of his triumph he falls beneath the sword of his brother, whom he had so cruelly wronged; yet even with his dying breath he mocks at the scorn of the world by boasting of the love of Goneril and Regan, whose tragical ends are a proof of his personal influence; and to the last exhibits the exultation and pride in success that are born of shame.

“Yet Edmund was below’d.  
The one the other poison’d for my sake,  
And after slew herself.”

Edmund, by his dark treachery and great personal beauty is a fitting symbol of the speciousness and villainy of the world.

Edgar’s is a character of great beauty; second in that respect only to Cordelia. Like her, he is disinherited and driven from a father’s presence; like her, too, he retains his filial feeling undiminished by any sense of wrong. Noble and confiding, he is easily supplanted by his brother, Edmund, and ruined in name and estate; a ban is set upon his head, he is hunted for his life, and is obliged “to shift into a madman’s rags,” yet still preserves his dignity of mind and sweetness of disposition. He accepts his misfortunes with a fortitude that seems almost to deprive them of their sting. He is the philosopher of misery, and by reflecting on the vicissitudes of fortune derives comfort from the very extremity of his sufferings.

“To be worst,  
The lowest and most dejected thing of Fortune  
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear;  
The lamentable change is from the best;  
The worst returns to laughter.

. . . But who comes here?  
My father poorly led? *World, world, O world!*  
But that thy *strange mutations* make us hate thee,  
Life would not yield to age.”

Experience teaches Edgar the full value of human kindness, and like Lear and his father, in ready sympathy with whose suf-



ferings he forgets his own, he learns the wisdom that is taught by the chastening strokes of Heaven. He describes himself as

“ A most poor man, made tame to Fortune’s blows,  
Who by the *art of known and feeling sorrows*  
*Is pregnant to good pity.*”

Edgar’s abject condition and disguise as poor Tom o’ Bedlam enables the poet to present him, without his losing our respect, as a symbol of the misery that follows vice, while in his real character he is also an example of unmerited adversity stoutly borne and finally conquered.

Another character who is ungoverned by any base or worldly consideration is Kent. As Cordelia exemplifies a true obedience to the law of kind in the family, so Kent is a model of fidelity in social and political relations, as of a servant to a master or a subject to a king. The more important of these relations, Kent thus sums up : —

“ Royal Lear,  
Whom I have ever *honor’d as my king,*  
*Lov’d as my father, as my master follow’d,*  
*As my great patron thought on in my prayers,*” etc.

On this species of loyalty rests civil and social order, and therefore it holds a prominent place in a play that is the image of the world.

In the simplicity of his manhood, Kent is morally as much “the thing itself” as poor Tom is physically. A nobleman of the highest rank, he yet holds title and station at their true worth; he regards them but as symbols, and is ready to imperil all for the sake of duty. He knows that true fidelity requires sometimes sharp admonition from the servant to the master, that complaisance and obsequiousness are often breaches of trust, and he does not hesitate to rebuke Lear’s “hideous rashness” in giving away his kingdom. Heedless of his master’s rage, he tells him : —

“ Be Kent unmannerly  
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man ?  
Think’st thou *that duty shall have dread to speak*  
*When power to flattery bows ? To plainness honour’s bound*  
*When majesty stoops to folly.*”

His zeal for his master, running contrary to his master’s inclination, is rewarded — as the way of the world is — with displeasure

and punishment. He is banished; and takes leave in a speech made up of antitheses, by which he puts in pointed contrast the reality and the symbol : —

“Then farewell, king, since thus thou wilt appear,  
*Freedom lives hence and banishment is here.*  
 The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid, [To CORDELIA.  
 Who *justly think'st* and hast most *rightly said,*  
 And your *large speeches* may your deeds approve,  
 [To REGAN and GONERIL.

That *good effects* may spring from *words of love*.

Thus, Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu :

He'll shape his *old* course in a *country new*."

Relinquishing title and estate, he adopts the garb of a menial and returns in this disguise to follow his master's fortunes and protect him as far as possible from the disastrous consequences of his folly. His love seeks no expression in words, but shines forth in services. He says :—

“ Now, banish'd Kent,  
If thou canst *serve* where thou dost *stand condemn'd*  
(So may it come) thy *master* whom thou *lov'st*  
Shall *find thee full of labors.*”

In this assumed character he stands forth most prominently as a type of devotion to rightful authority and of service for love's sake. In the nobility of his nature Kent claims only to be "*a man.*"

"*Lear.* What art thou ?

*Kent. A man."*

And in answer to Lear's inquiry, "What dost thou profess?" Kent describes what it is to be "a man:"—

“I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly that will put me in trust; to love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish,” which translated into other words may mean that he is sincere, trustworthy, a lover of truth; that he pursues wisdom and cherishes humility; that he is courageous and not quarrelsome, and is free from superstition.

Kent is chiefly distinguished, however, by his open nature and love of truth, and as Caius he affects a plainness of speech that minces no phrase, and a bluntness of manner that would ill become a character of higher rank. It is true that he gets into the stocks by it, which is typical, however, of the fate of those

who speak unwelcome truths. He lays down, moreover, the rule of truth, —

“All my reports go with the modest truth,  
No *more*, nor *clipp'd*, but *so*,” —

which is virtually the same formula which Cordelia had stated as the rule of love and obedience — “according to my bond, *nor more, nor less*” — and which evidently is the rule also of justice.

Before the battle between the forces of Cordelia and Albany, Kent tells us, —

“My point and period will be thoroughly wrought  
Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought,” —

thus showing that all with him is staked upon Lear's fortunes; and after Lear's death, he stops not to consult for his own good; his love reaches even beyond the grave; for being offered one half the kingdom by Albany, this true hero tells them that his course is the path of duty and far different from one that has title or power or even life in view.

“I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;  
My master calls me: I must not say, *No*.”

As the menial, Caius, he — and Edgar is another example — is an instance of truth, merit, nobility hidden in obscurity and neglect.

The opposite of Kent is Oswald, who is as thoroughly worldly and corrupt as Kent is pure and noble. Of him Kent says: —

“No contraries hold more antipathy  
Than I and such a knave.”

Oswald represents the obsequiousness of the world to riches and power. Kent had, as a faithful servant, braved his master's wrath by rebuking him for his conduct towards Cordelia: —

“Revoke thy doom,  
Or whilst I can vent clamor from my throat  
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.”

Of this manliness Oswald has no share: on the contrary, he is a fawning, smiling villain, who has no will but the wishes of Goneril, his mistress. All complaisance, he falls in with every humor of his superiors as men of his class ever do.

“Smooth every passion  
That in the nature of their lords rebels,  
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods,



Renegé, affirm and turn their haleyon beaks  
With every gale and vary of their masters."

Oswald is so base that he is proud of his baseness. He is one of those convenient superserviceable knaves who are commonly to be met with in the train of greatness, and whose ambition is fully gratified by being used confidentially in the villainy of their masters. To be on close terms with them that the world worships, though it be only in being employed in the vilest and meanest services, is sufficient to fill the souls of men of this class. They are slaves

" Whose easy borrow'd pride  
Dwells in the fickle grace of them they follow," —

and Oswald, the vile go-between of Edmund and Goneril, even in his dying hour shows his love of his base employment and makes a mockery of truth by his fidelity to wickedness. Such men are the very antithesis of all that is heroic in human nature.

*Lear*, being founded on a myth, partakes of a mythical character. All the plays (exclusive of the Histories) are in some sort myths; they are views of life which are capable of a general application. But *Lear* is a myth which has this special feature: it represents the world and man as having themselves, like myths, external forms which are symbolical of an indwelling and invisible life and meaning. And with that perfect mastery of dramatic unity with which this dramatist always causes his leading conceptions to permeate every part of his work, the incidents of the piece are drawn with a certain extravagance, which suggests the fabulous. The division of the kingdom, the colloquy of the king and the beggar on the heath, the blinding of Gloster, the meeting of the blind man and the madman, the combat of the brothers, the bringing in by Lear of the dead body of Cordelia, — these are incidents that are carried to the extreme limit of probability and even beyond; they are *tableaux* that speak to the eye, and like symbols convey a meaning; it is evident, moreover, that this exaggeration is not for the purpose of idealizing the story, but to imitate the mythical. An old king, holding discourse during a night of tempest upon a desolate heath with a mad beggar, is not a picture of actual life but is clearly invented to point a moral and convey a meaning of much wider scope than the mere story of an individual. And in like manner, as a myth

is symbolical, the characters of the piece are converted into *quasi* images or symbols of leading moral facts in human life. They are more than types of classes, although they are these too; they are representatives of fundamental principles that must enter in some degree into every picture of human nature. This effect is given to them by the characteristic of each being pushed to the utmost extreme, and as the qualities they represent are opposites, they exhibit a polarity, or the extreme points of opposite principles. In Regan and Goneril, the spirit of worldliness is carried so far as to divest the characters of humanity, of shame, of female modesty; they are called "fiends" and "tigers." At the opposite pole is Cordelia, who represents a heavenly purity of soul. In like manner, Edmund's treachery to his father is opposed to Edgar's filial truth; Kent's manhood and heroism to the Steward's meanness and cowardice; Gloster's credulity to Edmund's cunning; Lear's folly to the Fool's wisdom. So, too, the fierce and vindictive Cornwall is set off against the humane and honorable Albany. In each of the characters, its leading trait is pushed to an extreme that renders it single-sided and symbolical.

This tragedy represents man made wise in the school of experience. And considering the fondness of this playwright for wrapping up double meanings in one word, and also that the play is imitative of a myth or story with a hidden meaning, and moreover that it represents the getting of wisdom as the highest duty of man, it is more than probable that the name of the leading character and also the title of the piece had for him a significance connected with his treatment of the subject. Not only does the character of Lear but also those of Gloster and Edgar display that *lere*, lore or wisdom that is attained through sorrow and suffering. They are all brought by the lessons of experience to a wise and deep perception of the true sources of happiness. From this point of view we can clearly see the propriety and meaning of the character of the Fool and its consonancy with the rest of the tragedy. For the Fool, like most others of his class in the Shakespearian drama, embodies and gives utterance to those just views, a departure from which occasions the errors of the more serious and responsible characters. Hence his knowledge of the world, his maxims of prudence, his moral wisdom. He, moreover, embodies the spirit of a myth, the aim of which is to teach wisdom by symbol and figure. He is an embodied fable. He



talks in figurative sayings throughout, and, like another Æsop, points his aphorisms with illustrations drawn from the animal kingdom. Thus he says, "Winter is not gone yet, if the wild geese fly that way." "We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no laboring in winter." "When thou gav'st thy children thy kingdom, thou carried'st thine ass on thy back over the dirt." "Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill lest it break thy neck with following it, but the great one that goes upward, let him draw thee after." And so throughout the Fool speaks in parable and similitudes. As soon as he enters he gives Kent his coxcomb as a symbol of folly ("for taking one's part that is out of favor"), and then "teaches" Lear "a speech" that consists of a string of aphorisms which contain the pith and marrow of worldly prudence. His acrid wit makes him a "pestilent gall" to his master, but he follows that master's fallen fortunes with the faithfulest affection. Though he continually preaches the wisdom of self-love, he as continually practices the noble folly of self-sacrifice. This latter, however, proves his practical wisdom and the entire truth of his nature.

And in the Fool's knowledge of the world and in the satirical wit with which he lashes the deceits and hypocrisies of Goneril and Regan, he is a good dramatic representative of that doctrine termed by Bacon "*Serious Satire*, or the *Insides of Things*," which treats of the impostures and hypocrisies which are opposed to the virtues and duties proper to the different relations of life. It may be noted that the title of this doctrine, which in the Latin is "*Tractatus de Interioribus Rerum*," is the same which Bacon gives (in his letter to Fulgentio) to a Latin translation of his Essays, "*Sermones Fideles sive Interiora rerum*;" and from the character of the Essays, which are the very pith of worldly wisdom, and of which it has been well said that they seem scraps escaped from Shakespeare's desk, we can better judge what knowledge he intended to include in his doctrine of "*Serious Satire* or the *Insides of Things*." It was in fact that knowledge of men and the world of which he was himself so great a master that Hallam, in his estimate of his genius, says of him: "He was more eminently the philosopher of *human* than of *general nature*. Hence, he is exact as well as profound in all his reflections on *civil life and mankind*. . . . If we compare what may be found in the sixth, seventh, and eighth Books *De Augmentis*, in the



Essays, the History of Henry VII., and the various short treatises contained in his works on moral and political wisdom, and on human nature, from experience of which all such wisdom is drawn, with the Rhetoric, Ethics, and Politics of Aristotle, or with the historians most celebrated for their deep insight into civil society and human character, — with Thucydides, Tacitus, Philip de Comines, Machiavel, Davila, Hume, — we shall, I think, find that one man may almost be compared with all of these together." Int. Lit. Europ. Part III. ch. iii. § 75.

This was the knowledge, or at least such part of it as pertains to the deceits and hypocrisies of men, that Bacon would have included in Serious Satire or *Insides of Things*, a doctrine, moreover, which he enumerates among the deficiencies of learning, on which account it is more surprising that it should be so well imaged in the character of the Fool with his seriousness, his satire, and his knowledge of the world.

The characters having been examined as impersonations of the main conceptions in the scheme of the piece, or as coördinated members of the piece considered as a work of art, it may now be inquired whether they have not, in the constitution of their minds, their mental processes, their speeches and actions, also, a significance as examples or illustrations of certain tenets of philosophy. For inasmuch as success in life depends upon a knowledge of men, a desire for such knowledge will in the end create, as sciences or arts, both Morals and Policy.

But it may be observed that *Lear*, being an image of the world, the poet has seen fit to comprehend within it the whole circle of Philosophy, which, according to Bacon, has for its objects, God, Nature, and Man.

Philosophy is divided into Speculative and Operative, or into the *Inquisition of Causes* and the *Production of Effects*. And the inquiry, therefore, may first be made how this general or main division as laid down by Bacon is reflected in the dialogue and action of the piece.

And to this "the form" of the play will directly lead us, for the purpose of a fable is to impart a knowledge of the world or of men through symbols; therefore when this "form" is developed into a play, its characters will have such knowledge as their chief end and desire, and in their intercourse will all be eagerly engaged in observing and learning through looks, words, and

other symbols, the intents and purposes, in short, the hearts and minds of each other.

But it is the aim of Philosophy to *know through causes* (Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 2); and this, when the subject is human nature, is this same knowledge of men's hearts and minds, for their intentions and purposes are the final causes of their conduct, and all investigation of motives and study of human nature is an inquiry into causes. "The minds of men," says Bacon, "are the shops where their actions are forged;" and although he repudiates the search of final causes in the discovery of *physical* truth, he allows their use with respect to men's actions and the intercourse of life. "The final cause rather corrupts than advances the sciences *except such as have to do with human action*" (Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 2). To account for any event or posture of human affairs is to assign the causes of it. This, with regard to ordinary and familiar occurrences, is done almost instinctively, but immediately anything unusual takes place, curiosity is excited to know *the why* and *the wherefore*, and all such questions as "What's the matter?" "How came this?" "What do you mean?" and numerous similar ones are but the interrogations prompted by the mind's desire to know the *causes* and *reasons* of what it can not readily explain.

It may be observed that *the cause* of a thing and *the reason* of a thing, though often logically the same, are not always so, yet in popular language *cause* and *reason* are used as convertible terms and are so used in the play; for instance, "*Why* is the king of France so suddenly gone back? Know you *the reason*?"

The knowledge thus gained by experience is that wisdom which enables its possessor to give counsel in the pursuit of ends, for it points to the means or causes by which the desired effect may be produced; so that not only the *investigation of motives* but also the *asking of advice* is an *inquiry into causes* both moral and physical as the case may be. This wisdom, moreover, is condensed into maxims, precepts, proverbs, and is embodied in the rules and orders of superiors when such are given in the prudent administration of business or for the conduct of life. Nor would there be difficulty in the acquisition of this knowledge, would men honestly disclose their minds; whereas they hide so far as possible that self that lies so darkly within them and of which they know so much and yet so little; so that fiction takes the



place of fact and false pretense of true motive, while authority, instead of being exercised for truth and justice, is made the instrument of malice and revenge. "A knowledge of the world" is, therefore, indispensable to the correct understanding of what is going on around us, and in the intercourse of men, which is in a great measure made up of mutual exchange of intelligence, there is a constant interpretation of each other's motives. This feature of life will, of course, enter in some degree into every dramatic representation of human action, but a cursory review of some leading scenes of this epitome of the world will enable us to mark the masterly manner with which the incidents and dialogue are constructed to exemplify the natural curiosity to know current events and to *inquire into their causes*. The characters confess their intents and purposes or hide them under false pretenses (feigned causes); they interpret the actions of others and seek to penetrate their ends and motives; they ask counsel, teach precepts, and give orders with regard to some course to be pursued or means to be used towards certain ends (which last, however, is the application of causes to work effects); or they bring accusations, and to *accuse* (as the etymology indicates, *ad causam provocare*) is to call one to *assign a cause* for some act committed, which, as it is found good or bad, may lead to praise or blame, reward or punishment.

And as the chain of causes is but the law of nature (the background of the piece), and as the current of events — which as "the news of the day" is of so much interest and so eagerly sought for — is dependent on such laws, passages having reference to public and general events, but not necessary to the action of the piece, and having no essential importance, except perhaps to the artistic perfection of the work, are introduced and may be considered as representative or symbolical of the flux of things in the world at large.

The passages, therefore, that will be cited (a few only of the large number of the same kind that the play contains) will be those which refer to such matters as are mentioned above, namely, avowals of *intents* and *purposes*, *false pretenses* assigned as a cover for designs; *information* including *counsel* and *advice*; *inquiries* made into the *reasons*, *grounds*, or *causes* of conduct (of which there is a great variety of forms), or passages which refer incidentally to *passing events* or the *news of the day*.



Act I. Sc. 1. Lear declares his intents and purposes :

"Meantime we will *express our darker purpose*.  
 . . . *Know*, that we have divided  
 In three our kingdom and 't is our *fast intent*  
 To shake all cares and business from our age," etc.

Cordelia entreats Lear to make known to his court the true cause of his displeasure towards her.

"I yet beseech your Majesty  
 (If — for I want that glib and oily art  
 To *speak and purpose not* ; since what *I well intend*  
 I'll do 't before I speak) that you make known  
 It is no vicious blot, etc.  
 But even for want of that, for which I am richer," etc.

Act I. Sc. 2. Edmund questions the validity of considering illegitimate children base, and asks a reason : —

"Wherefore should I  
 Stand in the plague of custom, etc.  
 Why bastard ? wherefore base ?" etc.

Edmund advises his father to a certain course towards Edgar, and assigns a reason for Edgar's writing the letter : —

"If it please you to suspend your indignation against my brother, till you can *derive from him some testimony of his intent*, you shall run a certain course ; where if you violently proceed against him, *mistaking his purpose*, it would make a great gap in your own honor and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he *hath writ thus to feel my affection to your honor and to no other pretense of danger*."

Gloster finds in the "late eclipses" the cause of the discords in families and state. "Though the *wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus*, yet nature finds itself scourged by the *sequent effects*."

Edmund pretends to seek of Edgar the cause of his father's displeasure.

"Bethink yourself *wherein* you may have offended him," etc.

Act I. Sc. 3. Goneril instructs her servants to treat her father with disrespect that he may be driven to ask the cause and thus give her an opportunity to break with him.

"Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please  
 You and your fellows ; *I'd have it come to question*.  
 . . . . .

And let his knights have colder looks among you ;  
*What grows of it, no matter ;* advise your fellows so.  
*I would breed from hence occasions,* and I shall,  
 That I may speak," etc.

[“So close is the intercourse between causes and effects,” says Bacon, “that the explanation of them must in a certain way be united and conjoined.” The last quotation exemplifies this observation.]

Act I. Sc. 4. Kent assigns as a cause for disguising himself his “good intent” to serve the master that he loves.

Lear asks of the Knight the cause of the Steward’s insolence, “*Why* came not the slave back to tell me?” etc., and in reply the Knight hints at the cause in Goneril’s disaffection.

“My lord, I know not *what the matter is*, but . . . there’s a *great abatement of kindness*,” etc.

The Fool assigns a reason for offering Kent his coxcomb.

“*Fool.* Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

*Kent.* *Why*, my boy ?

*Fool.* *Why ? For taking one’s part that is out of favor.*”

He also states his reasons for wishing that he had two coxcombs.

“*Fool.* Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters ?

*Lear.* *Why*, my boy ?

*Fool.* If I gave them all my living, I’d keep my coxcomb,” etc.

The Fool tells Lear that his making his daughters his mothers is the cause of his being so full of songs.

“Then they for *sudden joy* did weep,  
 And I for *sorrow sung*.”

He also mentions the different causes of *his being whipped*.

Lear demands of Goneril the cause of her ungracious looks.

“How now, daughter ? *what makes that frontlet on ?*”

Goneril beseeches Lear “to understand *her purposes* aright,” and assigns the riotous conduct of the knights as the cause of the course she takes. Lear breaks forth into a curse upon her, and Albany, who enters at the moment, exclaims, “Now, gods, whom we adore, *whereof comes this ?*” to which Goneril rejoins: “Never afflict yourself to *know the cause*,” and to reconcile Albany to the course she has taken, tells him, —

*"I know his heart :*

What he hath uttered I have writ my sister," —

and instructs the messenger : —

*"Inform her full of my particular fear,  
And thereto add such reasons of your own  
As may confirm it more."*

Act I. Sc. 5. This scene between Lear and the Fool is made up of inquiries into causes and reasons.

*Fool.* Canst thou tell *why one's nose* stands i' the middle of one's face ?

*Lear.* No.

*Fool.* Why, to keep his eyes of either side of one's nose," etc.

*"Fool.* Canst tell *how an oyster makes his shell* ?

*Lear.* No.

*Fool.* Nor I neither, but I can tell *why a snail has a house."*

*Fool.* The *reason why* the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason, etc. . . .

If thou hadst been my fool, uncle, I'd have thee *beaten for being old before thy time.*

*Lear.* *How's that* ?

*Fool.* Thou shouldst not have been old, till thou hadst been wise."

Act II. Sc. 1.

*"Curan.* I have been with your father and *given him notice* that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him to night.

*Edmund.* *How comes that* ?

*Curan.* Nay, I *know not.* You *have heard of the news abroad,"* etc.

Edmund inquires of Edgar whether he had given cause of offense, pretending to think that Cornwall had come on account of it.

*"Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall* ?

He's coming hither ; now i' the night, i' the haste,

And Regan with him. Have you nothing said ?" etc.

Regan, with great address, uses Gloster's indignation against Edgar as the means of winning him over to her party against her father by giving as a cause of his conduct his companionship with Lear and his knights.

*"Regan.* What, did my *father's godson seek your life* ?

He whom my father nam'd ? Your Edgar ?

Was he not companion with the riotous knights

That tend upon my father ?

*Edmund.* Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

*Reg.* No marvel then, though he were ill affected," etc.



The scene ends by Regan's explaining to Gloster the causes of their coming.

"You know not *why we came to visit you*  
Thus out of season,  
*Occasions*, noble Gloster, of some prize  
Wherein we must have *use of your advice*," etc.

Act II. Sc. 2. Cornwall's *trial of the cause* between Kent and Oswald, or his investigation of the *grounds* of their quarrel.

Act II. Sc. 4. Lear is at a loss for a cause of Regan's leaving home.

"*Lear.* 'T is strange that *they* should so *depart from home*  
And not send back my messenger.  
*Gentleman.* As I learn'd  
The night before, there was *no purpose in them*  
Of *this remove*."

Finding his messenger in the stocks, Lear asks the cause of his disgrace.

"*Resolve me*, with all modest haste, *which way*  
*Thou might'st deserve* or *they impose*, this usage  
Coming from me."

Kent inquires the reason of the king's small retinue.

"*How chance the king comes with so small a number ?*"

Lear looks upon the alleged sickness of Cornwall and Regan as false pretense, a feigned cause for the neglect with which they treat him.

"*Lear.* Deny to speak with me ? *They are sick ? They are weary ?*  
*They have travel'd all the night ? Mere fetches ;*  
*The images of revolt and flying off.*"

Admitting afterwards these reasons to be true, he is brought to a violent reaction of feeling by seeing Kent in the stocks, which is a conclusive proof of intentional disrespect.

"Death on my state ! *wherefore*  
Should he sit here ? This act persuades me  
That this remotion of the Duke and her  
Is *practice only*."

Regan enters with a salutation : " I am glad to see you," to which Lear replies : —

"Regan, I think you are ; I know what *reason*  
I have to think so."

Regan tells Lear that if Goneril has restrained the riots of his followers, —

“’Tis on *such grounds* and to *such wholesome ends*  
As clears her from all blame.”

Goneril enters and Lear exclaims: —

“O heavens !  
If you do love old men . . .  
Make *it your cause* ; send down and take my part !  
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand ?”

And Goneril asks: —

“*Why* not by the hand ? *How* have I offended ?”

Regan gives reasons why she cannot entertain the hundred knights.

“I look’d not for you yet, nor am provided  
For your fit welcome,” etc.  
“*How*, in one house,  
Should many people under two commands  
Hold amity.”

The whole scene is made up of reasons for keeping or dismissing the knights, concluding with Regan’s *counsel* to shut Lear out, for which course the ground is assigned that

“He is *attended with a desperate train*  
And what they may *incense him to*, being  
*Apt to have his ear abus’d*, wisdom bids fear.”

The foregoing instances are only some of those contained in the first two acts, and are abundantly sufficient to show the strict method that rules the style of the piece. It is almost one continuous string of inquiries into causes. The other three acts will show instances even more pointed than any here quoted. It will be observed, moreover, that among them are allusions to physical as well as to moral causes, as in Lear’s asking, “What is the *cause of thunder* ?” or in saying, “Let them anatomize Regan : see what breeds about her heart. Is there any *cause in nature* that makes these hard hearts ?” These and other similar instances give the play — to use a favorite word of Bacon as well as of Shakespeare — a *seasoning* of Natural Philosophy. The exception that proves the rule is also admitted in the case of the miracle or event without a cause exemplified in Edgar’s pious fraud to save his father from suicide. But the whole dialogue of

the play is a tissue wrought out of inquiries into causes, and the assignment of them and of their effects, expressed in an endless variety of forms, and typifying the mind's desire for knowledge and the use of experience in the intercourse of life.

But will not this apply to any tolerably faithful imitation of human intercourse? To some extent, perhaps, but not with anything like the particularity here found, for in *King Lear* it is the Human World or Man that is represented, and it is the Human World or Man that is studied, and therefore this most prominent feature of human intercourse is particularly marked, inasmuch as it is only by an inquiry into moral causes that a "knowledge of the world" is obtained; and thus it will be seen that a strict analogy runs between the fundamental idea of the play and Bacon's view of the object of his philosophy, which (as mentioned before) he describes as "the building of the model of the world in the understanding," which is only a figurative way of saying that philosophy is a knowledge of causes or of the laws of Nature; and this when applied to Man is called "a knowledge of the world."

But besides this general analogy, or rather identity, between Philosophy and this incessant inquiry into causes, which with such marvelous skill is made to mould the phraseology of the piece, it falls out also that the *subject-matters* of the dialogue correspond with the main heads into which Bacon divides Philosophy, and that many passages and parts of scenes, and even the mental constitution of the characters, exemplify dramatically certain doctrines taught by Bacon, some of which, moreover, are distinctive and peculiar to himself.

In the *De Augmentis*,<sup>1</sup> Book III. ch. i. Bacon says: "The object of philosophy is threefold, — God, Nature, and Man. . . . Philosophy may, therefore, be conveniently divided into three branches of knowledge, — knowledge of God, knowledge of Nature, and knowledge of Man or Humanity."

Of the knowledge of God or Divine Philosophy he says: "For Natural Theology is also rightly called Divine Philosophy. It is

<sup>1</sup> The *Advancement* was published 1605, which is, perhaps, a little anterior to the production of *King Lear*, and the *De Augmentis* was not published till 1623; yet as Bacon's views are more fully stated in the latter work, the extracts will be *generally* made from it in the translation contained in the edition of Spedding, Ellis & Heath, Boston, 1863.



defined as that knowledge concerning God which may be obtained by the light of Nature and the contemplation of his creatures. . . . The bounds of this knowledge truly drawn are that it suffices to refute and convince Atheism and *to give information as to the law of nature*, but not to establish religion. And, therefore, there never was miracle wrought by God to convert an atheist, because the light of reason might have led him to confess a God, but miracles have been wrought to *convert idolators and the superstitious*, who acknowledged a deity, but erred in his worship." Book IV. ch. ii.

This receives a not inapt illustration in the miracle (for the superstitious Gloster believes it one), which when he leaps, as he supposes, from the cliff and is preserved by "the clearest gods, who make them honors of men's impossibilities," *converts* him from an impious despair that seeks rest in suicide to a religious resignation to the will of heaven. He says while standing, as he thinks, on the edge of the cliff:—

"O you mighty gods!  
This world I do renounce, and in your sights  
Shake patiently my great affliction off.  
If I could bear it longer and not fall  
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,  
My snuff and loathed part of nature should  
Burn itself out."

Act IV. Sc. 6.

This state of revolt is followed, after the leap, by the following expression of humble and pious resignation:—

"You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me  
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again  
To die before you please.  
Edgar. Well pray you, father."

Act IV. Sc. 6.

Bacon proceeds: "Therefore that God exists, that *he governs the world*, that he is *supremely powerful*, that he is wise and prescient, that he is good, that he is a *rewarder*, that he is an *avenger*, that he is an object of adoration,—all this may be demonstrated from his works alone." Book III. Aph. 2.

The tragedy is so thoroughly and obviously pervaded with the notion of the retributive justice of the gods, and of their power and government of the world, that it would be superfluous to cite

passages. Lear's sublime appeals to them for justice are familiar to all readers. But that the natural law by which guilt is punished by its own reaction is a *proof* of the existence of the gods and of their sleepless justice is distinctly asserted by Albany, upon his hearing of the death of Cornwall at the hands of his own servant, who is made indignant by his master's inhumanity.

"THIS SHOWS *you are above*  
*Yon justicers*, that these our nether crimes  
*So speedily can venge."*

Another branch of Natural Theology treats of the "Nature of Angels and Spirits;" and of unclean and fallen spirits Bacon says: "The conversing with them or the employment of them is prohibited. But the contemplation and knowledge of their nature, power, and illusions, not only from passages of Scripture, but from reason or experience, is not the least part of spiritual wisdom. So certainly says the apostle: 'We are not ignorant of his stratagems.'"

This subject of devils and unclean spirits is copiously introduced into the play in passages suggested by Harsnet's "Declarations of Egregious Popish Impostures." "Their *nature, power, and illusions*" are thus touched upon by "poor Tom:" —

"Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom *the foul fiend* hath led through *fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire*; that hath laid *knives under his pillow* and *halters in his pew*; set *ratsbane by his porridge*; made him *proud of heart*. . . . Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes." Act III. Sc. 4.

"This is the foul fiend *Flibbertigibbet*; he begins at *curfew* and walks to the *first cock*. He gives the *web* and the *pin*, squints the *eye*, and makes the *harelip*." Act III. Sc. 4.

"Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once; of *lust*, as *Obidicut*; *Hobbi-didance*, prince of *dumbness*; *Mahu*, of *stealing*; *Modo*, of *murder*; and *Flibbertigibbet*, of *mopping and mowing*, who since possesses chambermaids and waiting-women." Act IV. Sc. 1.

Natural Philosophy Bacon divides into "*The Inquisition of Causes* and the *Production of Effects*; Speculative and Operative." He adds that he "is well aware how close is the intercourse between causes and effects, so that the explanation of them must, in a certain way, be united and conjoined." De Aug. Book II. ch. iii.

Writing as a philosopher, however, and treating of these matters in the abstract, he can consider these two branches separ-

ately, and thinks it best so to do, but the play-writer who paints life in the concrete has not this advantage; he is obliged to exhibit the cause and effect in "close intercourse" or in conjunction, as in the following, where Cordelia inquires of the physician what cause or "means" may be used to help her father.

"What can man's wisdom do,  
In the restoring his bereavèd sense?  
He, that helps him, take all my outward worth.  
*Phy.* There is means, madam.  
Our foster nurse of nature is repose,  
The which he lacks; that, to provoke in him,  
Are many simples operative, whose power  
Will close the eye of anguish.  
*Cor.* All blest secrets,  
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,  
Spring with my tears, be aidant and remediate  
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him!  
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life  
That wants the means to lead it."

To the same class will belong passages of precepts, maxims, orders, counsels, etc., all which prescribe means for producing effects.

Notwithstanding the strict union of cause and effect, and the involution of one in the other, so frequently instanced in the piece, there yet seems to be somewhat more prominence given to the speculative or theoretical than to the operative branch of Philosophy. "The Speculative is divided into *Physic* and *Metaphysic*, whereof *Physic* inquires and handles *Material* and *Efficient* Causes, *Metaphysic*, the *Formal* and *Final*."

Of *Efficient*, and particularly of *Final* causes, it has already been seen that every page of the play furnishes instances, inasmuch as the intents and purposes of men are the final causes of their actions, and an inquiry into these makes up a large portion of the dialogue. An example, however, of *material* causes is drawn in by the head and shoulders, as it were, in the storm scene. After Lear rushes out into the tempest, Gloster has some words of compassion for him, and describes the heath whither he had gone as utterly without shelter.

"Alack! the night comes on and the bleak winds  
Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about  
There's scarce a bush."



Yet Kent afterwards, on finding Lear, says : —

“Alack ! bare-headed.

Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel,  
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest.  
Repose you there, while I to *this hard house*  
(*More hard than is the stone whereof 't is rais'd,*  
Which even but now, demanding after you,  
Denied me to come in) return and force  
Their scanted courtesy.”

This house thus alluded to is certainly inconsistent with Gloucester's description of the heath as entirely shelterless, and has nothing whatever to do with the action of the piece, or even with Kent's action, for he does not return to it (as he says he will), but it enables the poet for some reason of his own — by reference to the materials of which it is built — to introduce an instance of a *material* cause.

Nor is a reference to the formal cause omitted. The formal cause is that which makes a thing what it is. Everything is that which it is through *form*.

Edmund sneering at his father's belief in astrology, and alluding to the supposed influence of the stars over one's nativity, says that his own qualities might, perhaps, be attributed to “The Dragon's tail and Ursa Major,” the constellations that presided over his birth; but adds: “*Tut, I should have been what I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.*” It was his soul or “form,” not the stars, that determined his nature.

In addition to these instances of causation, the poet has thought proper to introduce also the fundamental principle which constrains the mind to attribute every new appearance to a cause.

To Cordelia, who asserts that she has “*nothing*” to say for the sake of a share of the kingdom, Lear replies : —

“*Nothing can come of nothing ; speak again.*”

Of this axiom (after quoting it from Lucretius, and also from Persius) a great metaphysician, Sir W. Hamilton, says: “These lines of Lucretius and Persius enounce a physical axiom of antiquity, which expressing in its purest form the conditions of human thought, expresses also implicitly the *whole intellectual phenomenon of causality.*”

*Physic* is divided by Bacon “into three doctrines. For nature

is either united and collected, or diffused and distributed. . . . The third doctrine (which handles nature diffused or distributed) exhibits all the varieties and lesser sums of things, . . . and is but as a *gloss or paraphrase attending upon the text of natural history*." And this third doctrine he again divides into "Physic concerning things *Concrete or Creatures*, and Physic concerning things *Abstract or Natures*."

No one can read *Lear* without remarking the frequent mention of animals, birds, insects, and the numerous metaphors taken from the animal kingdom, which give the play a *decided* note of Natural History.

*Concrete Physic* is conversant either with the heavens, or meteors, or the elements, or the species, etc.

The storm scene will pass for an instance of the topic of meteors or elements, while of kinds or species there are various passages that may be taken as illustrative, as for instance poor Tom's enumeration of different kinds of dogs in answer to Lear's expostulation.

"The little dogs and all,  
Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, see they bark at me.  
*Edg.* Tom will throw his head at them : avaunt, you curs.  
Be thy mouth or black or white,  
Tooth that poisons if it bite,  
*Mastiff*, grey-hound, mongrel grim,  
*Hound or spaniel*, brack or lym,  
Or bob-tail tyke, or trundle-tail,  
Tom will make him weep and wail," etc.

*Abstract Physic*, or *Natures*, when applied to Man, would refer to his *disposition, qualities, natures*, all which are strongly marked, as in "*the fiery disposition*" of Cornwall, "*the milky gentleness*" of Albany, the "*choleric*" Lear, the "*tardiness of nature*" of Cordelia, or the following from Edgar's sketch of the "serving-man," "*False of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand*," and other similar passages which may be classified under the head of *Abstract Physic or Natures*.

"Among these parts of Physic," says Bacon, "that which enquires concerning the heavenly bodies is altogether imperfect and deficient. . . . As for Astrology, it is so full of superstition that scarce anything sound can be discovered in it." De Aug. Book III. ch. iv.

"The doctrine of *nativities*, election, inquiries, and the like

frivolities have in my judgment for the most part nothing sure or solid."

This topic is introduced by Gloster, a believer, and is ridiculed by Edmund, a skeptic.

"*Gloster.* These late eclipses of the sun and moon portend no good to us. . . . Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide. . . . This villain of mine comes under the prediction ; there's son against the father ; the king falls from bias of nature ; there's father against the child. We have seen the best of our time," etc.

Coming to that "knowledge whereunto the ancient oracle directs us, which is the knowledge of ourselves," he treats of "the doctrine concerning Man," which he divides into "The Philosophy of *Humanity* and Civil Philosophy."

"Philosophy of Humanity consists of parts similar to those of which man consists, that is, of knowledges which respect the body and knowledges which respect the mind."

Of these latter he thus discourses, De Aug. Book V. ch. i. : —

"The doctrine concerning the Intellect and the doctrine concerning the Will of Man, are, as it were, twins by birth. For purity of illumination and freedom of will began and fell together ; and nowhere in the universal nature of things is there so intimate a sympathy as between truth and goodness."

"The knowledge which respects the use and objects of the faculties of the human soul has two parts, namely, *Logic* and *Ethic*. . . . Logic discourses of the understanding and reason ; Ethic of the will, appetite, and affections ; the one produces determinations, the other actions. It is true, indeed, that the *imagination performs the office of an agent or messenger or proctor in both provinces, both the judicial and ministerial.* For *sense sends all kinds of images over to imagination for reason to judge of ; and reason again when it has made its judgment and selection, sends them over to imagination, before the decree be put in execution.* For *voluntary motion is ever preceded and incited by imagination, so that imagination is as a common instrument to both, — both reason and will.* Neither is the *imagination* simply and only a messenger, but it is either *invested with or usurps no small authority in itself*, besides the simple duty of the message. For it was well said by Aristotle "that the mind has over the body that commandment which the lord has over a bondman ; but that *reason has over the imagination that commandment*



which a *magistrate* has over a *free citizen* “*who may come also to will in his turn.*” De Aug. Book V. ch. i.

According to this psychology, a healthy and concurrent action of the sense, the imagination, and the reason must take place, whether the object be to arrive at the true or to choose the good. For if the sense either fails us or deceives us or if the imagination in any way misrepresents the notices of the sense, the reason must necessarily be led into error.

And first, with regard to the senses, they generally are true to their functions, as inlets of intelligence, the two principal ones being the eye and ear (Adv. 93), but throughout the play the use of all the senses for the acquisition of knowledge is strenuously insisted upon.

“Canst thou tell,” asks the Fool, “why a man’s *nose* stands in the middle of his face? Why, to keep *one’s eyes* either *side* of *one’s nose*, that what a man cannot *smell out*, he may *spy into*.”

To see is to know, and to look into, to seek, to find, and many other words denoting the action of the eye are but different modes of expression for mental perception. And so far is this carried that the use of the other senses is spoken of as a mode of sight. Thus blind Gloster says:—

“Oh, dear Edgar,  
Could I but live to see thee in my touch  
I’d say *I had eyes again.*”

So too mad Lear, —“A man may see how this world goes *with no eyes* ; look *with thine ears*.”

“All interpretation of nature commences with the senses and leads from the perceptions of the senses by a straight, regular, and guarded part to the perceptions of the understanding” (Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 38). Bacon therefore proposes aids to the senses, which may strengthen, enlarge, and rectify their immediate action, — such as glasses and instruments. Among others he mentions *spectacles*, which we also find in the play. “Come,” says Gloster to Edmund, “if it (the letter) be nothing, I shall not need *spectacles*.”

This though trivial in itself may be taken with other correspondences. And again he says, in the *De Augmentis* (Book V. ch. ii.): “The senses, though they may deceive us or fail us, may nevertheless with diligent assistance suffice for knowledge, and that by the help not so much of instruments as of *those experi-*

*ments which produce and urge things which are too subtle for the sense to some effect comprehensible by the sense."*

"For example, it is obvious that *air and spirit and like bodies, which in their entire substance are rare and subtle, can neither be seen nor touched*. Therefore in the investigation of bodies of this kind, it is altogether necessary to *resort to reduction*." Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 40.

Thus Lear, unable to determine whether Cordelia breathes or not, cries —

"Lend me a looking-glass ;  
If that *her breath will mist or stain the stone,*  
Why then *she lives*, — "

and again, having placed a feather upon her lips, he exclaims: —

*"This feather stirs ; she lives ! if it be so," etc.*

Another instance of the same kind is the experiment to which Lear resorts, when first restored to consciousness, to prove his own identity.

"I will not swear *these are my hands : let's see ;*  
*I feel this pin prick*. Would I were assur'd  
Of my condition."

These are slight instances, no doubt ; but they are natural and proper to dramatic action ; they, moreover, elucidate Bacon's principles as well as more important ones would do.

But it is not so much from the defects or fallacies of the senses that the reason is led into error as from the irregular action of the imagination, which, stimulated by the desires, is ever ready to abandon its duty as "simple messenger" between the sense and reason and to "usurp authority" over the judgment. Common cases of this kind are found in all false and worldly estimates. The play is full of instances. But a want of concurrent action between the senses and imagination will lead to the grossest delusion, while at times the imagination acquires power to annul the very functions of both the senses and reason, thus leading to downright insanity. These errors are exemplified in the cases of Gloster and Lear. Of course, reference is here made to Gloster's loss of his eyes and to Lear's loss of his reason.

In Gloster's case, the loss of sight lays him open to the pious stratagem practiced upon him by Edgar, who, aware that his father is meditating suicide by throwing himself from a cliff, and



acquainted, also, with his superstitious turn of mind, hopes to reconcile him to life by convincing him that the gods miraculously prevent his self-destruction. He therefore pretends, while leading his father on level ground, that they have mounted a hill and reached its top, and by a description of an imaginary view from the edge of a precipice, especially calculated to put the scene before the mind's eye, he persuades his father that they were standing even then within a foot of the verge of the cliff. Some critics have thought that the poet was attempting the sublime in this description (and it will pass very well in its way for good word-painting), but it is quite clear that he was not astride of his Pegasus for the purpose of testing his powers of flight, but had the faithful steed harnessed as usual to the car of his philosophy. Edgar purposely breaks up the view into pieces, divides and subdivides the altitude, and refers to the effects produced by distance upon the senses — upon the sight in the apparent diminution of objects and upon the hearing in the attenuation of sound — in order to supply familiar standards that will enable his blind father to depicture the scene forcibly upon his imagination.

The same method is adopted by Edgar when he supposes himself at the bottom of the cliff and looking upward.

*“Ten masts at each make not the altitude  
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell,”* etc.

The delusion of Gloster is, of course due to the action of his imagination, uncorrected by the senses. His mind's eye sees only the false pictures that Edgar's words portray; but its action, though erroneous, is healthy.

In the case of Lear on the other hand which immediately follows in the same scene, the hallucination arises from the imagination usurping the office both of sense and reason. His eyes are wide open, but the images they receive are not conveyed to the understanding; the imagination, instead of acting as a faithful messenger, substitutes for the notices of the sense its own phantoms, and these are so vivid that the judgment overpowered as in a dream, passively receives them as if they had a corresponding reality. Lear says: —

“There's your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; — this piece of toasted cheese will do 't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on



a giant. Bring up the brown bills. Oh, well flown bird!—i' the clout, i' the clout: hewgh! Give the word," etc.

In treating of that branch of logic which Bacon terms the "Art of Judging," he makes his celebrated division of fallacies into *sophistical* fallacies, fallacies of *interpretation*, and *false appearances* or *idols*. In the Advancement, which gives perhaps the earliest form of this doctrine, he styles these last simply "*fallacies or false appearances*," but in the translation *De Augmentis* he terms them "*false appearances or idols*," and divides them into the Idols of the *Tribe*, of the *Cave*, and of the *Market Place*. There is also a fourth class, the Idols of the *Theatre*, but with these we are not concerned at present. It should be observed, however, that by *idols* he does not intend objects of false worship, before which the mind bows down, as many have supposed, but rather uses the word in its original Greek sense of *images*, *phantoms*, *illusions*, or what he calls in *Valerius Terminus* "the inherent and profound errors and superstitions in the nature of the mind." The term *idol* is an antithesis to an *idea* or true form of a thing. They are the prejudices that destroy the balance of the mind and give it a bias to one side or the other. "They are inseparable," says Bacon, "from our *nature and condition of life*."

The Idols of the Tribe have their foundation in human nature and in the tribe and race of men.

"As an example," (De Aug. Book V. ch. iv.) "of the Idols of the Tribe, take this. The nature of the human mind is more affected by affirmatives and actives than by negatives and passives,—whereas by right, it should be indifferently disposed towards both. But now a few times hitting or presence produces a much stronger impression on the mind than many times failing or absence; a thing which is the root of *all vain superstition and credulity*, . . . as *astrology*, dreams, omens, and the like."

This class of errors and superstitions is exemplified by Gloster's credulity and belief in astrology,—a belief in which he is confirmed by the events of the day,—dissensions and troubles in family and State having chanced to follow certain eclipses.

"These late eclipses in the sun and moon," he says, "portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet *nature* finds itself *scourged by the sequent effects*."

In cities, mutinies ; in countries, discord ; in palaces, treason, and the bond crack'd 'twixt father and son," etc.

Edmund covertly satirizes this credulity. "I am thinking, brother, of a *prediction* I read this other day, *what should follow these eclipses?*"

"I promise you *the effects* he writes of, *succeed unhappily*," etc., — the old fallacy, *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*.

"The Idols of the Cave arise from each man's peculiar nature both of mind and body and also from *education and custom* and the accidents which befall particular men. For it is a most beautiful emblem, that of Plato's cave: for (not to enter into the exquisite subtlety of the allegory) if a child were kept in a dark grot or cave under the earth until maturity of age and then came suddenly abroad and beheld this array of the heavens and of nature, no doubt many strange and absurd imaginations would arise in his mind. Now we, although our persons live in view of heaven, yet our *spirits are included in the caves of our own bodies*, so that they must needs be filled with infinite errors and false appearances, if they come forth but seldom and for brief periods from their cave and do not continually live in the contemplation of nature, as in the open air." De Aug. Book V. ch. iv.

Of these idols there are a great number and variety. Among other errors which spring from this source are the prejudices that grow out of habits, associations, and conditions in life — *education*, in short, taken in its widest sense. It has been said that every man is, by force of custom, imprisoned in a cage of glass so thin as to be invisible, but which gives a peculiar form and color to all objects of his perception ; and to this effect may be likened those mental distortions and "false appearances," produced by habit and education, and termed "idols of the cave," of which Lear, whose nature is bent and distorted by custom and condition in life, is a powerful portrayal. His whole course of life has rendered the action of his mind a constant example of this error. Long years of pride and power have engendered in him habits of thought so inveterate that at times he is absolutely incapable of perceiving the truth. And this is all the more striking in him, as being a king and a dispenser of rewards and punishments, it especially behooves him to preserve the exact balance of his judgment. But there can be few stronger examples of the force

of custom to shut up the mind in a cave, as it were, and prevent its perception of things in the clear light of truth than the sentences he passes upon Cordelia and Kent; they are marked by almost judicial blindness. And in pronouncing banishment on Kent, whom he deems guilty of treason for remonstrating against his arbitrary course towards Cordelia, he unconsciously betrays his unfitness as a judge by admitting that "neither his nature nor his place can bear" the slightest opposition to his will.

"Lear. Hear me, recreant!  
On thine allegiance, hear me! —  
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow  
Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride  
To come betwixt our sentence and our power;  
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear;  
Our potency made good, take thy reward," etc.

This class of minds exemplifies, as Bacon points out, the saying of Herclitus, "that men seek truth in their *own little worlds* and not in *the greater world*."

"The Idols of the Market Place," says Bacon, "are most troublesome which have crept into the understanding through the tacit agreement of men, concerning the imposition of words and names. Now words are generally framed and applied according to *the conception of the vulgar* and draw *lines of separation according to such differences as the vulgar can follow*." De Aug. Book V. ch. iv.

The most intricate and deeply rooted of these idols are the words "which spring out of a *faulty and unskillful abstraction*." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 60.

An instance of this class directly in point occurs in the soliloquy of Edmund, in which he speculates upon the propriety of the world's calling him "base" on account of his illegitimate birth, and gives his reason why such a term should be considered in such a case a most "faulty and unskillful abstraction."

"Why bastard? wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous, and my shape as true  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?  
Who in the lusty stealth of nature, take  
More composition," etc.

. . . *Fine word — legitimate.*"

Act I. Sc. 2.



The passage is not quotable at length, but those who recall it will perceive that it fully sustains the claim here made of its being a perfectly apposite illustration (from Edmund's point of view) of an error arising from a faulty abstraction.

Before dividing Philosophy into three branches of knowledge, viz., of God, of Nature, and of Man, Bacon constitutes "one universal science to be as the mother of the rest." This science he distinguishes "by the name of *Philosophia prima*, *primitive* or *summary* philosophy; or *Sapience*, which was formerly defined as the knowledge of things divine and human; . . . my meaning is simply this, that a science be constituted which may be a receptacle for all such axioms as are not peculiar to any of the particular sciences, but belong to several of them in common." De Aug. Book III. ch. i.

Among such axioms he mentions, "All things are changed and nothing lost." This is a rule in Physics exhibited thus: "The Quantum of Nature is neither diminished nor increased." The same holds in Natural Theology, with this variation: "It is the work of Omnipotence to make somewhat nothing and to make nothing somewhat."

This axiom was frequently quoted by Bacon, as for instance in *Novum Organum*, Book II. Aph. 40: "There is nothing more true in Nature, than that *nothing is produced from nothing*."

It appears in the play in Lear's speech to Cordelia, already cited, "Nothing can come of nothing," and it also appears a second time in a colloquy between Lear and the Fool.

"Fool. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?"

Lear. Why, no, boy; *nothing can be made out of nothing*.

Fool. Pr'ythee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to."

Act I. Sc. 4.

Another of these common axioms is "The force of an agent is *increased* by the *reaction of a contrary*," which is a rule in Physics. "The same has wonderful efficacy in Politics, since every faction is violently irritated by the encroachment of a contrary faction."

This doctrine of "antiperistasis," or of action and reaction, is conspicuous in the piece. It appears in the alternations of passion in Lear, but the "increase of intensity of one of two contraries by the juxtaposition of the other," as of one faction by the en-

croachment of the contrary, has an apposite illustration in the scene where Goneril and Regan resolve to cut down Lear's train of knights, which he, on the other hand, is intensely anxious to retain. Just in proportion as he grows urgent and passionate, does the stony immobility of his daughters deepen and harden, and on the contrary, as they cut down the number of knights from one hundred to fifty, from fifty to twenty-five, from twenty-five to one, from one to none, do his entreaties grow more piteous, his anguish more intense, until, with a heart bursting with grief and rage, he hurries out into the storm.

There is another part of Primitive Philosophy, of which, Bacon says, "if you look to the terms, is ancient; if to the thing I mean, is new." It is an inquiry with regard to the Adventitious *Conditions* (or *Adjuncts*, as they are styled in The Advancement) of Essences or things, as *greater, less, much, little, before, after, identity, diversity, habit, privation*, and the like. These are common to all classes of subjects, and are evidently derivations from the predicaments of Aristotle, but the peculiarity they possess as a part of the Primitive Philosophy of Bacon is that he considers them as they exist in nature, and not merely in logic and notion. "For example," he says, "no one who has treated of *much* and *little* has endeavored to assign a reason why some things in nature are and can be so numerous and plentiful, others so few and scanty; for it certainly cannot be that in the nature of things there should be as much gold as iron; that roses should be as abundant as grass," etc. De Aug. Book III. ch. i.

Now these external or adventitious conditions or adjuncts of things, when inquired of with respect to man, must refer to the varieties and differences of their conditions and fortunes; and the consideration of the *more* and *less*, the *great* and *small*, the *better* and *worse*, when applied to human life, is but an inquiry why there are so many poor, so few rich; so many wretched, so few happy; so many foolish, so few wise; and these inequalities and the remedies for them form a conspicuous feature of the play. In fact, the miseries and privations of man are most impressively typified in the Bedlam beggar, "poor Tom." Gloster says to him:—

"Here, take this purse, thou whom *the heaven's plagues*  
*Have humbled to all strokes; that I am wretched*  
*Makes thee the happier: — Heavens deal so still!*

Let the *superfluous* and *lust-dieted* man  
 That *slaves* your ordinance, that will not see  
 Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly ;  
 So distribution should undo excess,  
 And each man have enough."

*Identity* and *Diversity* are among these *Adjuncts* or *Conditions* of Things ; yet when applied to human beings, so great and often so groundless do the different conditions seem to be that Kent, in the case of Lear's daughters, is driven to find the cause of them in planetary influence.

"It is the stars,  
 The stars above us, govern our conditions ;  
 Else one self-mate and mate could not beget  
 Such different issues."

And here may be introduced a notice of a striking resemblance between a letter of Bacon's to Bishop Andrews and a passage in *Lear*, viz., the soliloquy of Edgar (Act III. Sc. 6). The letter was prefixed to "The Advertisement touching a Holy War," and was written in 1622 after his fall.

The letter runs thus : —

MY LORD, — Amongst consolations, it is not the least to represent to a man's self like examples of calamity in others. For examples give a quicker impression than arguments ; and, besides, they certify us that which the Scripture also tendereth for satisfaction, that no new thing has happened to us. This they do the better, by how much the examples are like in circumstances to our own case ; and more especially if they fall upon persons that are greater and worthier than ourselves. For as it savoureth of vanity to match ourselves highly in our own conceit, so, on the other side, it is a good sound conclusion that if our betters have sustained the like events, we have the less cause to be grieved:

If we arrange the parallel passages from the letter in the order in which they are versified in the play, they will stand thus : —

"If our betters have sustained the like events, we have the less cause to be grieved."

"When we our betters see bearing our woes,  
 We scarcely think our miseries our foes."

"Amongst consolations, it is not the least to represent to a man's self like examples of calamity in others."



"Who alone suffers, suffers most in the mind,  
 Leaving free things and happy shores behind.  
 But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip  
 When grief hath mates and bearing fellowship!"

"And more especially if they fall upon persons that are greater and worthier than ourselves."

"How light and portable my pain seems now  
 When that which makes me bend, makes the king bow."

"This they do the better, by how much the examples are liker in circumstances to our own."

"He childed as I father'd."

As it is impossible that the passage in the play could have been suggested by the letter, — the play having been published in 1608, — there are three conjectures to account for the coincidence. 1. That such coincidence is purely accidental. 2. That Bacon had seen or read the play, and that this comparatively unimportant soliloquy of Edgar had remained in his memory, and that he afterwards used it in writing his letter; or 3d — which is the only other supposition possible — that Bacon wrote both the letter and the passage.

Another resemblance is perhaps worth observing between a passage in "The Advertisement touching a Holy War," and one in the play.

The first is as follows: "And much like were the case if you suppose a nation where the custom were that *after full age the sons should expulse their fathers and mothers out of their possessions and put them to their pension . . .* being a total violation and perversion of the law of nature and of nations." Bacon's Works, Vol. XIII. p. 218.

The same opinion is attributed by Edmund to Edgar: "I have often heard him maintain it to be fit that *sons at perfect age and fathers declined, the father should be as a ward to the son, and the son manage the revenue,*" — upon hearing which proposed "*violation of the law of nature*" Gloster exclaims, "O villain, villain! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! Worse than brutish! Abominable villain!"

The passages of the play which are parallels of Bacon's tenets of Civil Philosophy have reference to that of which so much has already been said; that is, the knowledge of men. One branch of Civil Philosophy is the *doctrine of negotiation*, a part of which,

says Bacon, "I report as deficient; not but that it is used and practiced even more than is fit, but it has not been handled in books." This is "Wisdom for One's Self," or "The Knowledge of Advancement in Life" (including the Arts of Policy), of which doctrine Edmund is for a time a very successful practicer.

The main and summary precepts of this doctrine relate to the just knowledge of ourselves and of others. "Men may be known," says Bacon, "in six ways,—by their countenances and expressions, their words, their actions, their dispositions, their ends, and lastly by the reports of others."

All the personages of the piece study each other in these respects, and endeavor also to obtain "*information of particulars touching persons and actions*" from the reports of others. For an instance of this, the scene (Act IV. Sc. 5) may be taken, where Regan attempts to learn from the Steward the contents of the letter he is bearing to Edmund, and the reasons of Goneril for writing it:—

*Reg.* But are my brother's powers set forth?

*Stew.* Ay, madam.

*Reg.* Himself in person there?

*Stew.* Madam, with much ado;

Your sister is the better soldier.

*Reg.* Lord Edmund spake not with your lady at home?

*Stew.* No, madam.

*Reg.* Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.

*Stew.* I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

My lady charg'd my duty in this business.

*Reg.* Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you

Transport her purposes by word? Belike,

Something—I know not what—I'll love thee much.

*Let me unseal the letter.*

*Stew.* Madam, I had rather—

*Reg.* I know your lady does not love her husband;

I am sure of that; and at her late being here,

She gave strange ocellads and most speaking looks

To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

*Stew.* I, madam?

*Reg.* I speak in understanding; you are; I know it," etc.

But to judge of character or disposition by the face and actions is the business of Physiognomy, which art Bacon makes one branch of what he terms "the league between the Soul and Body," discovering the dispositions of the soul by the lineaments of the body.

This art is copiously illustrated, as it is one mode of knowing men, and it particularly exemplifies the leading idea on which the play is founded, namely, that the external world is one of appearance, and that all its images and phenomena are but signs and symbols through which the inward essence and hidden qualities of things are expressed. Of these symbols, the most significant and best worth deciphering are the expressions of the body and countenance, such as glances, tears, smiles, blushes, frowns, gestures, the gait, — in short, all bodily action and posture as indicative of the thoughts and emotions of the mind. And the method of *Lear*, in the delineation of passion, is to place before us the physical effects of passion, and to depict the bodily movements or states that are caused by the ebb and flow of feeling.

Some instances may be cited, as of the pining away of the Fool after the banishment of Cordelia : —

“ Since my young lady’s going into France, the Fool *hath much pin’d away*.”  
*Lear*. No more of that ! I *have noted it well*.”

The vulgar insolence of the Steward, who has been instructed by Goneril to treat her father with disrespect, and “ *to let his knights have colder looks*,” is thus expressed : —

“ *Lear*. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal ? [*Striking him*.]

Goneril’s sullenness is set before us in her father’s and the Fool’s description of her face : —

“ *Lear*. How now, daughter ? what makes that frontlet on ?”  
 Methinks you are too much of *late in the frown* !”

*Fool*. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning. Yes, forsooth. [*To GONERIL*.] I will hold my tongue, *so your face bids me, though you say nothing*.”

The fright of the Steward is thus painted by Kent : —

“ A *plague upon your epileptic visage* !  
*Smile you my speeches as I were a fool* ?  
 Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain  
 I’d drive you cackling home to Camelot.”

The outraged humanity of Cornwall’s servant, who resists his master’s attempt to put out Gloster’s eyes, is marked in the bold and erect attitude his aroused manhood causes him to take : —

“ *Serv*. Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

*Reg*. [*To another serv*.] Give me thy sword. A *peasant stand up thus* !”



Lear says of Regan : —

“ And here 's another whose *warpt looks proclaim*  
*What store her heart is made of.* ”

The grief of the old king is rendered more touching by his struggle to repress any unmanly exhibition of it : —

“ Life and Death ! I am asham'd  
 That thou hast power to *shake my manhood thus* —  
 That *these hot tears, which break from me perforce,*  
 Should make you worth them.”

And again : —

“ O let not *woman's weapons, water drops,*  
 Stain my man's cheeks.  
You think I'll weep?  
 No, *I'll not weep* ; I have *full cause of weeping,*  
 But *this heart shall break into a thousand flaws*  
 Or ere *I'll weep.*

Edgar's knightly bearing is thus described : —

“ Your *very gait did prophesy a nobleness.* ”

Observe also the direct use made of symbols, — and under the head of symbols may be taken tokens, emblems, passwords, in short, anything having a representative character, as Lear gives his crown as a symbol of power, and the Fool gives his cap as a symbol of folly.

So Kent gives his ring to “ the gentleman ” to be shown to Cordelia as a token of fidelity : —

“ If you shall see Cordelia  
 (As fear not but you shall), *show her this ring* ;  
 And she will tell you who this fellow is  
 That yet *you do not know.* ”

Goneril says to Edmund, giving him a favor : —

“ *Wear this.* Spare speech.  
 Decline your head. *This kiss, if it could speak,*  
 Would stretch your spirits up into the air,” etc.

Albany accuses Edmund of treason and throws down his glove : —

“ There 's my *pledge.* I'll prove it on thy heart, etc.  
 Edmund. *There 's my exchange.* ”

Edmund, in order to countermand his writ on the life of Lear, sends his sword as a token of reprieve.

"*Edgar.* Send thy *token of reprieve.*  
*Edm.* Well thought on. *Take my sword.*  
 Give it the captain."

Other instances of a like nature are the following : —

"*Lear.* Here's *earnest* of thy service." [*Giving KENT money.*]  
*Lear.* Give the *word.*  
*Edgar.* Sweet *marjoram* [i. e. *king-wort*].  
*Lear.* Pass."

And again Lear says : —

"There's *my gauntlet.* I'll prove it on a giant."  
 "Ingratitude, more hideous than *the sea monster.*"

This is said to allude to the hippopotamus, the hieroglyphical symbol of ingratitude.

Of a like nature is the expression "sharper than a serpent's tooth," which the commentators say refers to the viper, an emblem of ingratitude.

Kent, asked by Cornwall why he is angry with the Steward, gives as a reason, —

"That such a slave as this should *wear a sword*  
 That wears no *honesty,*" —

where *a sword* is referred to as a badge of honor and gentility.

"I will be," says Lear, "the *pattern* of all patience."

Frequent mention is made of garments as symbolizing condition in life. Thus Cordelia says to Kent, disguised as a menial :

"Be better suited.  
 These weeds are *memories* of those *worser hours* ;  
 I pr'ythee put them off."

A trumpet gives sign of the coming of a particular person : —

"What trumpet's that ?  
*Reg.* I know't. *My sister's.*"

Goneril, sneering at Albany's pacific disposition, says : —

"Where's thy *drum* ?  
*France spreads his banners* in thy noiseless land."

And again she says : —

"I must *change arms* at home, and give the *distaff*  
 Into my husband's hands."

Gloster determines to send Edgar's *picture* through the land, thus putting him, as it were, into the "rogues' gallery: "—

"Hark, the duke's trumpets! I know not *why* he comes.  
All ports I'll bar . . . besides, *his picture*  
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom  
May have *due note* of him."

Observe also in the dialogue the use of symbols themselves, as letters of the alphabet and other marks of notation, as when the Fool calls Lear "an O without a figure," or when Kent calls the Steward "*a zed*, an unnecessary *letter*."

So, too, Edmund hums, "*fa, sol, la, mi*."

On this, Dr. Burney says: "Shakespeare shows by the context that he was well acquainted with the property of these syllables in solmization, which imply a series of sounds so unnatural that ancient musicians prohibited their use. The monkish writers on music say, *mi contra fa est diabolus*; the interval *fa mi* including a *tritonus* or sharp fourth, consisting of three tones without the intervention of a semitone expressed in the modern scale by the letters F G A B, would form a musical phrase extremely disagreeable to the ear."

It may be worth observing that Bacon refers to the same natural law:—

"In the ordinary rises and falls of the voice of man, there fall out to be two half notes between the unison and diapason, and this varying is natural. For if a man would endeavour to raise or fall his voice still by half-notes, like the stop of a lute, or by whole notes alone without halves as far as an eighth, he will not be able to frame his voice unto it, which sheweth that *after every three whole notes nature requireth*, for all *harmonical purposes*, *one half note to be interposed*." Nat. Hist. Cent. II. 105.

Names of animals are used as symbols of moral qualities, as in this of Edgar: "hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey."

Affined with symbols are descriptions of *types of classes*, such as Edgar's description of "the serving man;" Kent's, of "the smiling rogues;" Cornwall's, of the "blunt man;" Edgar's, of the "Tom o' Bedlam"; and of the like nature are names which stand for moral qualities, as *Ajax* for heroism, *Tom o' Bedlam* for poverty, *the Turk* for licentiousness, *the Scythian* for barbarism, *Nero* for wickedness, etc.



Most names and words are general terms, applicable to many things, but each man has his own proper name by which he is known. Proper names are especially symbolical, as they designate individuals. Aristotle says that "words are the symbols in the voice of the affections of the soul," and therefore have direct reference to truth and knowledge. They are so regarded in the play, and many examples of them as symbols occur. The first use that man in paradise made of his knowledge was to give names to every living creature according to his properties (Advancement, p. 92), and so it has been ever since; we all give names to things, and especially to men, according to our knowledge of their natures and qualities; as Lear, after one of the Fool's gibes, asks, "Dost thou *call me fool*, boy?" and the Fool replies, "*All thy other titles* thou hast given away; that thou wast born with."

Lear, amazed at Goneril's filial ingratitude, affects not to know her, and ironically asks, —

"*Your name*, fair gentlewoman?"

Albany, referring to Goneril's wickedness, addresses her: —

"*Thou worse than any name!*"

Language fails to furnish a symbol.

So Cordelia says to her sisters: —

"*I know you what you are;*

And, like a sister, am most loth to call

*Your faults as they are nam'd.*"

But the most conspicuous instance in the play, the *locus classicus*, of bestowing names according to a knowledge of properties, is that volley of epithets with which Kent asserts his knowledge of Oswald.

"*Steward. I know thee not.*

*Kent. Fellow, I know thee.*

*Steward. What dost thou know me for?*

*Kent. A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats, a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking knave; a glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; a one-trunk-inheriting slave," etc., —*

and so on through a long list of names, referring to the Steward's base nature and origin.

So intimate is the connection between language and the gnostic powers of the soul that every man has his style that symbolizes

his character. "The style is the man." This is exemplified as follows: Kent, having made some blunt speeches, for which Cornwall reprimands him, replies: —

"Sir, in good faith, in sincere verity,  
Under the allowance of your grand aspect,  
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire  
On flickering Phœbus' front —

*Corn.* What mean'st by this?

*Kent.* To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, sir, I'm no flatterer," etc.

The Somersetshire dialect which Edgar, disguised as a peasant, uses is an instance of words symbolizing state and condition of life.

These last lines of Kent point to that relation between words and "the form" that is always exemplified in a Shakespearian play. In *Lear*, which regards the external world as a symbol only, words also are regarded as symbols, — veritable when facts are behind them, but empty when used for flattery, for false pretense, or falsehood. Kent's lines, exaggerating the language of servility and flattery, are an instance; and Goneril's and Regan's professions of love for their father are couched in words which are plainly false symbols.

A few words may be added with regard to some prominent points in the diction of the piece.

The notions of polarity, action and reaction, dualism, as they run throughout the real, so also do they run throughout this mimic world. These notions appear in various forms, such as *reciprocity, retribution, correlation, opposition, alternation*, and the like. To *reciprocate* in its radical sense is *to move back and forth, to and fro*, and *reciprocation* is *a going back upon itself, a returning the same way*. This notion meets us even in the movements of the personages of the piece. But it is seen in its strongest form in the events which bring retribution. The correlation of parent and child, husband and wife, and others, enter essentially into the structure of the piece, and bring up at once the notions of reciprocity, duality, or an exchange of equivalents between two, or the rule of justice, equity, equality, etc. Reciprocity of love implies *union*; of hate, *opposition*, including *contrariety, contradiction, inversion, division*, which last — often in its most violent forms of *breaking, bursting, cracking, dislo-*

*cating* — are met on every page. These notions underlie classes of words; they also impart form to phrases, and occasionally to passages of considerable length. A few — merely to establish the correctness of the analysis — will be cited.

In the following line and a half spoken by the unfortunate Kent to his still more unfortunate master, are found the notions of duality, contrariety, and reciprocity : —

“ If Fortune brag of *two* she *lov'd* and *hated*,  
One of them we behold.”

Lear describes his feelings and his folly by *inversion* : —

“ O most small fault !  
*How ugly* didst thou in Cordelia shew !  
Which, like an engine wrench'd my frame of nature  
From the first place ; *drew from my heart all love*,  
And *added to the gall*. O Lear, Lear, Lear !  
Beat at this gate that *let thy folly in*  
And *thy dear judgment out* ! ”

Albany's counter-current of sympathy is thus expressed : —

“ I told him of the army that was landed ;  
He *smil'd at it* : I told him you were coming ;  
*His answer was, The worse*. Of Gloster's treachery  
And of the loyal service of his son  
When I inform'd him, then *he call'd me sot* ;  
And told me I *had turn'd the wrong side out*.  
What most *he should dislike*, seems pleasant to him ;  
*What like, offensive*.”

The blunt honesty of Kent, and the sensitive pride of Lear, is brought out in a speech made up of contradictions, or positive and negative, affirmation and denial : —

“ *Lear*. What's he, that hath thy place so much mistook,  
To set thee here ?  
*Kent*. It is both he and she,  
Your son and daughter.  
*Lear*. No.  
*Kent*. Yes.  
*Lear*. No, I say.  
*Kent*. I say, yea.  
*Lear*. By Jupiter, I swear, no.  
*Kent*. By Juno, I swear, ay.  
*Lear*. They durst not do 't,” etc.

Polarity is imitated in the ejaculations, “ Life and Death ! ”  
“ Night and Day ! ” “ Heaven and Earth ! ” etc., and the oppo-



site or correlative notions are constantly presented of light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, friendship and enmity, flattery and plainness, superfluity and want, young and old, male and female, better and worse, more and less, in and out. Also phases denoting opposite extremes, as in Edgar's challenge : —

"From the *extremest upward* of *thy head*  
To the *descent* and *dust beneath thy feet*,  
A most toad-spotted traitor."

On the other hand the description of Cordelia's sorrow (Act IV. Sc. 3) is a beautiful instance of *equality* or *equipoise*.

These rhetorical refinements and felicities are obvious when attention is once drawn to them, and it is useless to multiply instances. *Lear* has always been considered a masterpiece ; it is the grandest and most picturesque of tragedies ; it is also the noblest of apologies. Its symbolical character is maintained to the end. The death of Goneril, for instance, is made known by a gentleman who enters bearing a bloody knife. So startling a phenomenon calls for immediate explanation : —

"*Gent.* Help, help ! O, help !  
*Edgar.* What kind of help ?  
*Alb.* *Speak, man.*  
*Ed.* What means this bloody knife ?  
*Gent.* 'Tis hot, it smokes ;  
It came even from the heart of —  
*Alb.* Who, man ? *speak.*  
*Gent.* Your lady, sir, your lady," etc.

Albany's comment is expressive of a horror which leaves no room for pity : —

"This *judgment of the heavens*, that *makes us tremble*,  
*Touches us not with pity.*"

And Lear, as he holds in his arms the dead body of Cordelia, — an empty effigy, for to him who so loved the symbol, the symbol now is all that is left, — and vainly seeks in look and breath some sign of life, expiates all his errors in that breaking of the heart which is revealed by his request to the attendant to "undo the button" of his garment, — the outward sign of the inward fact, — and which tells us that his great chastisement is ended, and that "on the rack of this tough world" he will be stretched no longer.

But the hanging of Cordelia — what significance has this shock-

ing outrage to justify its introduction? Was it necessary in order to pour the last drop into the bitter cup the old father is made to drink? or was it to complete this picture of moral confusion by a crowning instance of the triumph of villainy over goodness? or was it rather to soothe us after the horrors of the piece by showing us the independency of virtue on fortune? Even the heathen moralist tells us that "where wisdom is, fortune has no divinity." And this serenity and security of soul Cordelia herself expresses, when a captive with her father in the hands of her enemies, she says: —

*"For thee, oppressèd king, am I cast down,  
Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown."*

To Cordelia death can come neither early nor late, but timely. "Ripeness is all." Heroism and martyrdom would lose their names, and their nature, too, could they look for a material reward. The unjustest death in the annals of the world was suffered for love; and the wise poet tells us, —

*"On such sacrifices  
The Gods themselves cast incense."*

The foregoing *minutiae* have been dwelt upon because they are proofs of the design of the poet, who as an artist aims at giving unity to his work by no superficial means nor adherence to ordinary rules, but by causing the play to be the development of a "*form*" or *idea*, which in this case is that of a *myth* or *fable*, the essence of which is to convey moral truth and a knowledge of the world by symbols or representative images. He was an artist who forgot nothing, neglected nothing, and omitted nothing that could conduce to effect. Founding his play on an old fable, he carries the spirit and characteristics of a fable into his piece, and makes it symbolical throughout. The *dramatis personæ*, as we have seen, are mythical, being images or types of moral ideas, or rather of social propensities or principles, so far as is consistent with dramatic propriety or probability; and the incidents and situations form a series of tableaux that speak to the eye and convey a significant meaning even without the aid of the dialogue. The characters are portrayed as recognizing a knowledge of the world as the only safe guide and as seeking such knowledge by the interpretation of looks and words as symbols of hidden meanings. The Fool speaks in parables throughout; the diction is

filled with words signifying tokens, emblems, and the like ; and the play, taken as a whole, is an image of the moral world, with its goodness and wickedness, its hollowness and truth, its wisdom and folly, built up for our contemplation by the poet, and furnishing a dramatic illustration or analogon to that "model of the world" which Bacon says it is the "aim of his philosophy to build in the understanding."



## THE *MERCHANT* OF VENICE.

THE main incidents of the plot of this comedy are taken from the *Gesta Romanorum*, with some additions from other sources. Treating of the origin of this play Douce remarks: "On the whole, then, it is conceived that the outline of the Bond Story is of Oriental origin; that the author of the old play of '*The Jew*' and Shakespeare in his *Merchant of Venice* have not confined themselves to one source in the construction of their plots, but that the *Pecorone* and the *Gesta Romanorum*, and perhaps the old *ballad of Gernutus*, have been particularly resorted to. It is, however, most probable that the *original play* was indebted chiefly, if not altogether, to the *Gesta Romanorum*, which contained both the main incidents; and that Shakespeare *expanded* and improved them, partly from his own genius and partly, as to the Bond, from the *Pecorone*, where the coincidences are too manifest to leave any doubt."

This opinion, which condenses into a few words pretty much all that can be said about the sources of this play, evidently implies that Shakespeare found its ground-plan in the old play of "*The Jew*" (mentioned by Gosson in his "School of Abuse," as representing "the greediness of worldly choosers and the bloody minds of usurers"), but notwithstanding the strong probability of this there is reason for supposing that he had the *Gesta Romanorum* before him, for he seems to have taken the constructive idea of the piece from the peculiar and characteristic feature which gave to that work its special literary form. The *Gesta Romanorum* was the most famous and popular of those collections of stories made in the 13th and 14th centuries to be used by the preachers and monks as texts for sermons or as examples illustrative of some theological or moral doctrine. They were regarded as parables with a double meaning, derived from the analogy they presented between the sensible and spiritual worlds. Each story had its "morality" attached to it, and this "morality" was considered the important part of the work, the story itself being held of but

little value except as an example to illustrate the doctrine. These "promptuaries of examples" were very numerous, and constituted a distinct class of writings; and, indeed, it was the fashion of those times to moralize fictions of all kinds; even Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were thus treated, and the "morals" yet appended to *Æsop's Fables* are supposed to have originated in this practice. The *Gesta* was entitled "*Gesta Romanorum Moralizata*," and an edition of an English translation of Fifty-eight stories has the following title-page: "*Gesta Romanorum or Fifty-eight Stories originally (it is said) collected from the Roman records with applications of morals for the suppressing of vice and increasing of virtue and the love of God*, by B. P., adorned with cuts, very pleasant to read and profitable to practice."<sup>1</sup>

The poet, therefore, in borrowing two of these stories as matter for his play, preserves their allegorical features and combines them in a plot, which may be thus briefly stated:—

Portia, an heiress, whose immense wealth and rare personal endowments, both physical and mental, render her a representative of the highest material and moral worth, has a seat at Belmont, not far from Venice, and hither resort renowned suitors from all parts of the world to seek her in marriage. She herself has no voice in the matter, the disposal of her hand being dependent on a lottery devised by her father and enjoined by his will, which binds her to marry any suitor who shall choose the one of three caskets that contains her picture. These caskets are of gold, silver, and lead respectively, and bear certain ambiguous inscriptions, which, together with the estimates familiarly associated with the metals of which they are made, are supposed so to influence the mind that no suitor can make the right choice but one who is worthy of success. Bassanio, a young Venetian nobleman, loves Portia and is loved by her, but she refuses to marry him unless he can win her at the same hazard the others take. He is resolved, however, to put his fortunes to the test, but a somewhat prodigal mode of life having left him without the means to visit Belmont, he applies to his friend Antonio, a rich merchant, for aid. Antonio willingly grants the request, but all "his fortunes being then at sea," and not having at the moment the needed sum

<sup>1</sup> For an account of these stories, collected and invented by the preachers and monks for pulpit use, see Warton's *History of Poetry*, and Douce's *Dissertation on the Gesta Romanorum*.



in hand, he asks a loan of Shylock, a Jew, on whom and whose religion, Antonio, through Christian prejudice, had frequently heaped contumely, for which in turn Shylock cherishes against him a secret and implacable hate. The Jew, however, seeing in the circumstances a possible opportunity for revenge, affects a friendly feeling and agrees to lend the money, refusing to take any interest for the use of it, at the same time suggesting, as if in sport, that Antonio give him a bond, the penalty of which, instead of a sum of money to be paid, shall name as a forfeit a pound of flesh to be cut off Antonio's body nearest his heart. The merchant, confident of the return of his ships, "seals to the bond," and Bassanio departs for Belmont, where he is successful in choosing the right casket; but, in the midst of his joy, he learns that Antonio, through great and unexpected losses, has not been able to pay the Jew, and that the latter is loudly clamoring for justice and the enforcement of the bond. Bassanio at once hastens to his friend, and Portia at the same time secretly starts for Venice, where she appears in court, disguised as a doctor of laws, who has been summoned from Padua to adjudge the case. She offers the Jew thrice the amount of his bond, and urges upon him with the greatest force and eloquence to show mercy to his debtor. But Shylock is implacable, and demands judgment for the pound of flesh according to the strict letter of the instrument. This the court awards, but, pushing Shylock's own literal interpretation to the extreme, decides that he must take neither more nor less than a just pound, and must not spill one drop of blood, or else his life is forfeit. This, of course, rescues Antonio from the danger in which the Jew's want of charity had placed him.

It is obvious that these incidents can find place only in a world of romance, and that the story is invented simply as a fanciful yet impressive example to instruct us in a Christian or moral lesson.

The skill with which are united the discordant materials of this play, which differ as widely in tone as a mercantile transaction differs from the wildest romance, has been remarked upon by the commentators, but something more than skill in marshaling the movements of a plot, or in "blending two actions in one event," is required to bring under one and the same principle — and thus reduce to moral unity — such heterogeneous elements as the mutual hatred and contempt of Jew and Christian, the avarice of Shy-



lock and the munificence of Antonio, the conduct and motives of the suitors in making choice of the caskets, the conservatism of Portia, the insubordination of Jessica, the rigor of the Venetian law, and the loquacity and prolixity of Gratiano and Gobbo.

The "form," or idea, which governs the construction of the fable of a Shakespearian play, always contains some leading conception which from its frequent recurrence may be taken as the key-note of the piece: in *The Merchant of Venice* the "form" is that of an example illustrating a moral truth. But an example is one of a class and is taken as a specimen of the whole class, and whether it is used as illustration or as argument, its force lies in resemblance or analogy; consequently the conceptions of analogy, similitude, proportion, sameness, etc., are met with in all parts of the piece. As this comedy, moreover, in keeping with its title, deals with questions of worth and valuation, the distinction between the worlds of soul and sense, which always enters into a Shakespearian picture of life, becomes in this play the difference between moral and material values; and the incidents of the play, however varied in circumstance, are all analogous in being examples illustrating the same truth, that is, the necessity of correctly judging of values and discriminating between the real and factitious. The characters, also, exhibit their balance of mind, or else their partialities and prepossessions, by the correct or incorrect estimates they make of men and things. In the choice of the caskets by "Morocco" and "Aragon," the substance is sacrificed to show and ornament; in the enforcement of the bond, the letter of the law prevails over its spirit; the same principle appears in Portia's adherence to the arbitrary obligation she is under by reason of her father's will, notwithstanding her natural right to consult her own wishes in her marriage, while the negative instance is found in Jessica's claim to decide her happiness through an equity that overrides parental authority; and still other analogous instances are presented in the idle talk of Gobbo and Gratiano, who use many words to express but little matter.

*Lancelot*

All these instances stand harmoniously together; they all are over-valuations of the unessential and are errors of the same class — differing only in degree — with those more serious ones on which the most important movements of the play depend, that is, the false estimates which men make of each other under the influ-

ence of prejudice growing out of individual and complexional peculiarities, instead of resting their judgments upon the qualities and attributes of the soul, in which their real worth consists.

In accordance, also, with the "idea" of an example or a story that illustrates a "moral," the characters in their discourses frequently run parallels between the objects of the sense and moral facts, as when Portia says, —

"How far that little candle throws his beams !  
So shines a good deed in a naughty world," —

which two lines are a parable in themselves.

So the princes of Morocco and Aragon, as well as Bassanio, favor us with impressive homilies upon the respective texts inscribed on the caskets; all the characters abound in illustration and allusion; their logic is inductive, consisting of arguments drawn from precedents and analogy, and the whole piece, or at least that predominant part of it which gives it its overpowering interest, sets before us in visible type and figure how poor is material wealth compared with love and mercy, the practice of which in human intercourse is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity as announced in the Sermon on the Mount.

This last is an appropriate moral background, inasmuch as a play which is founded on the idea of an "illustrative example," and which is, therefore, an exemplar of such examples, must teach a doctrine broad and comprehensive enough to contain all "morals" within its scope, and therefore *The Merchant of Venice* exemplifies the Christian charity "that fulfilleth the law."

It may be added that it is not so much a science or an art as a doctrine that this play elucidates, for where the greatest value, that is, the highest moral worth, is the object of the desires, the means used to attain it are the practice of love of one's fellow-men, and this practice, reduced to precept, finds its best expression in Christian doctrine. *Vide* De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.

In order to portray in dramatic form the importance of guarding against the sacrifice of the essential to the factitious, or, in other words, the necessity of judging correctly of the values of things, the poet places his scene in Venice, a city devoted to pleasure and commerce, and presenting a sphere of life where the factitious is most frequently taken for reality and material values are held of higher account than moral worth. In a mercantile



sense, a *good* man is one who meets his pecuniary obligations however sordid or vile his character may be.

The business of the merchant is the quest of gain ; but all men are merchants in one sense ; they all are in quest of some good, the acquisition of which they consider a gain ; and in the commerce of the world, as in the world of commerce, he is the most successful who can best judge of values. But the highest values, as all experience teaches, are truth, love, wisdom, and other forms of moral worth, yet the bulk of mankind, —

“The fool multitude who judge by show,  
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach  
That pries not to the interior,” —

set more store by material and tangible wealth ; and these different estimates, as affecting men's relations, are particularly seen in those cases of creditor and debtor, where penalties and forfeitures having been incurred, they are either pitilessly enforced through love of money or remitted through charity and forbearance.

The commercial side of Venetian life is represented by Antonio and Shylock, while Gratiano, Salanio, Lorenzo, and others may stand for the pleasure-seekers of that gay capital. These latter seem to be occupied only with mirth, masques, and feasting. Their manners, as they display them, are distinctively Christian, and are not more defined by the love and courtesy that prevail among themselves than by the bitter prejudices they entertain, on religious grounds, against the Jews ; and this leads to the consideration of the moral doctrines which underlie the characterization of the play, and which may be summarized in two brief but leading texts of Christian morality, of which one is “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” and the other is the golden rule : “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and prophets” (Matt. vii. 12).

The spirit of these precepts, which in perfection is found only in the Divine Exemplar, shines through the piece, taking form in the courtesy and beneficence of Portia, Antonio, and the group around them, and bringing into strong relief the Mosaic *lex talionis* : “And thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” (Deut. x. 19), which finds a powerful exponent in the Hebrew Shylock.

The “golden rule,” which is as regulative of the heart as of



the judgment and is an epitome of all rules, is necessarily that higher law which fits every case and to which, if human law does not conform, it is iniquitous and oppressive, and consequently a veritable sacrifice of the essential to the factitious. As it is stated in the play, it is hardly less comprehensive than in the original text: —

“ In the course of justice *none of us*  
*Should see salvation : We do pray for mercy*  
*And that same prayer doth teach us all to render*  
*The deeds of mercy.”*

By this precept, every man's wish for his own good is made a rule for his conduct towards others. The judgment by which we decide what is due from others to ourselves is a precedent whereby to determine what we owe to others, or as Whateley states it: “A man's *judgment* in one case may be aided or corrected by an appeal to his *judgment* in another *similar case*. It is in this way we are directed by the highest authority to guide our judgment in those questions in which we are most liable to deceive ourselves, viz., what on each occasion ought to be our conduct towards another; we are directed to frame for ourselves *a similar supposed case* by imagining ourselves to change places with our neighbors and then considering how, in that case, we should in fairness expect to be treated.”

The golden rule is therefore a piece of reasoning which rests on example, and — that it should be imperative on the conscience — *our own example*.

It is evident that the force of the precept is derived from the essential sameness of nature in all men, growing out of a common reason and heart, that binds them in one brotherhood through which one is an example for all. But this essential sameness of nature is varied and thwarted by infinite individual peculiarities arising from differences of temperament and constitution, and also of race, creed, sect, country, which under the general name of “the affections” bias the feelings, warp the judgment, and assign the highest value to that which is merely formal and superficial. “Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.” Men should love best what is of the highest intrinsic worth, but in practice this rule is generally reversed, and they prize highest that which enlists their selfish affections and desires, without reference to its real value. And out of these gross prejudices and

false valuations arise the animosities and hatreds that fill society with strife and the lives of individuals with disappointment and wretchedness.

In practice, the love of one's neighbor manifests itself in courtesy and the gratuitous bestowal of favors and benefits, and is the direct opposite of that love of money and greed of gain which demand pay for every service and use for every loan, and in the extreme become avarice, a passion that absorbs the whole nature of the man and blights and withers every noble affection.

These well-worn truisms become brilliant in effect and novel in interest as put before us in the examples of Antonio the Christian and Shylock the Jew.

Of all human concerns, there is none in which the form is so habitually mistaken for the substance as in matters of religion. Questions of conscience and creed are those over which prejudice holds the strongest sway. Charity, the essence of all religion, is forgotten in fierce contentions over rubric and ritual. Men rack and impale and burn each other alive, not because they do not worship the same Creator, but because they worship him in different modes. There is no greater blot on human nature, no fouler stain on Christianity, than the barbarous and intolerant treatment of the Jews during the Middle Ages. Scattered in comparatively small numbers throughout the nations of Christendom, despised and reviled for their nationality and their creed, they could offer no resistance to the atrocities that were perpetrated upon them in the name of religion. Even their helplessness could excite no generous feeling in their behalf. ( Shylock, one of this race, is brought before us not only as a type of a Jew, but also, more broadly and generally, as a victim of persecution. He is an outcast in the community in which he dwells; an "infidel," a "villain," a "dog," by inheritance. He stands entirely without the pale of Christian sympathy. He is supposed to know no touch of generosity or of courtesy; to harbor no design but of craft and villainy. His successes are looked upon as results of the most infamous practices; his direst misfortunes excite only unfeeling jeers and laughter. No epithet of contempt, no indignity of treatment, is spared him. Driven from every high and honorable employment, that might otherwise have expanded his mind and dignified his manners, the Jew has given up his subtle intellect to a sordid love of gain. The genius of



the Hebrew, that once found voice in prophecy and song, is now dwindled to sharpness at a bargain and craft in obtaining small advantages. Yet beneath all the pressure of outrageous persecution, he still shows the unconquerable tenacity and fortitude of his race. He has learned to bear the insults and contumely that are heaped upon him "with a patient shrug," and takes new heart when he reflects that it is for his religion that he suffers, and that "sufferance is the badge of all his tribe." He repays, too, Christian contempt with Jewish hate. His manhood is still alive within him. Though he bends low and speaks humbly, he shuts up in his bosom a thirst for vengeance like a burning coal. The obloquy that is poured upon him only fixes and strengthens his feelings, as some streams, instead of wearing away the objects they encounter, harden them into flint. Despised because he is a Jew, he is all the prouder to be a Jew; reviled for his usury, he clings to his gains with something of religious zeal, even for the hate he bears the Christians who revile him. These two passions — love of money and hatred of Christians — go hand in hand in his nature, and serve to augment and strengthen each other, as two currents, turned into the same channel, swell each other's force. Appealing to the sacred traditions of his nation in support of his "thrift," he reinforces his avarice with his religion and his hatred of Christians with his avarice. True, he is willing to buy revenge at "a good round sum," but even this is not a predominance of hate over his love of money; his sharp eye sees in it a profitable investment, it being likely to remove a rival whose liberality has greatly interfered with his gains. "I will have the heart of him if he forfeit," he exclaims of Antonio, who had loaded him with insults so intolerable that, had Shylock been a Christian, he would have wiped them out instantly in blood; but adds, "for were he out of Venice, *I can make what merchandise I will.*"

Antonio is the type of the Christian as Shylock is of the Jew; and the bitterness and contempt they entertain for each other are examples of the animosities engendered by the clash of mutual bigotries. The first lines that Shylock utters sets this before us: —

"I hate him, for he is a Christian:  
But more for that, in low simplicity,  
He lends out money gratis, and brings down



The rate of usance here with us in Venice.  
 If I can catch him once upon the hip  
 I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.  
 He hates our sacred nation, and he rails  
 On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,  
 Which he calls interest : Cursed be my tribe,  
 If I forgive him !”

This is plain exchange of hate for hate.

Antonio is as great a bigot as Shylock. Munificent as the Jew is miserly, he is equally narrow-minded in matters of religion. His Christian charity has not breadth enough to take in the Jew. Apart from this, he is very admirable. His gentleness, his generosity, his patience and self-sacrificing love are painted as characteristics of his race and creed. He is one to whom his friends are devoted ; one than whom

“No kinder gentleman treads the earth.”

He is described as

“The kindest man,  
 The best conditioned and unwearied spirit,  
 In doing courtesies, and one in whom  
 The ancient Roman honor more appears  
 Than any that draws breath in Italy.”

It would be Antonio's boast — as no doubt it would be the boast of his friends concerning him — that he is a Christian gentleman ; yet in his treatment of the Jew, this *kindest man*, this courteous spirit, is neither a Christian nor a gentleman. Shylock has never injured him nor provoked him, but merely because he is of the Hebrew race, and sees fit to lend his money at interest (for *usury* in this play means simply *interest* and not *excess* of it), Antonio, forgetful of Christian love, of common humanity, forgetful even that the Jew is a man, has no word for him but one of insult, no conduct towards him but insufferable outrage and scorn. Shylock says : —

“You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,  
 And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine ;  
 And all for use of that which is mine own.  
 Well, then, it now appears you need my help :  
 Go to, then — you come to me, and you say,  
 Shylock, we would have moneys ; you say so ;  
 You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,  
 And foot me, as you spurn a stranger cur  
 Over your threshold ; — moneys is your suit,” etc.

*“Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,  
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.  
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not  
As to thy friends,” etc.*

It is startling to find how an otherwise lovely character can be disfigured by the indulgence of a national and religious prejudice, which, utterly blind to the fact that Jew and Christian participate in a common manhood and are alike the creatures of the Father of all, can occasion so deep an aversion to a fellow-being merely on account of an accidental difference of race and creed. But let us quote Shylock's terse statement of the case.

*“He hath disgraced me and hindered me of half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, heated my enemies ; and what's his reason ? I am a Jew.”*

Shylock then proceeds to show the insufficiency of this reason and justifies himself by Christian example.

*“Hath not a Jew eyes ? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions ? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is ? If you prick us, do we not bleed ? if you tickle us, do we not laugh ? if you poison us, do we not die ? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge ? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility ? revenge ; if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example ? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute ; and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.”*

There can be no more vivid picture than this, of the rancor that grows out of the false estimates which both Jew and Christian place upon differences merely formal and unessential.

Shylock's avarice is another instance of an all-absorbing “affection” that leads to undue valuation of that which has but factitious worth. He prizes money for itself, and not for what it will procure. He loses sight of the fact that it is but a representative of value, having no intrinsic worth in itself ; that its best and first use by its possessor is to fill his home, as far as may be, with happiness and promote all the sweet charities of domestic life. But Shylock's penury has made his “house a hell,” and has alienated the affection of his only child. Had he retained or gained her love, it had been of more worth to him than all his wealth, whereas his love of money has cramped and crushed her sympathies. She had become reluctantly and not without misgivings

“Asham’d to be her father’s child  
And, though she was a daughter to his blood,  
She was not to his manners.”

She elopes with a Christian — more hateful and despicable in his estimation than one of the stock of Barabbas — and carries with her a goodly portion of his hoarded ducats. Here begins the retribution; he thinks her flight and robbery of him a curse that falls upon him as a Jew. He says, “The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now;” he mistakes; it is the recoil upon himself of his own avarice. So deeply is his nature perverted by that sordid passion, and so blinded is his judgment to the true worth of things, that he sets more store by his wealth than he does by his child, and in a frenzy of mingled rage and grief he prays for the restoration of his jewels and money, even at the cost of his daughter’s life.

“I would my daughter were dead at my foot and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin!”

But the retribution reaches not its climax, until he is made to feel through his deepest affections how much, after all, moral worth transcends mere material value. This is brought home to him by conduct on the part of Jessica which shows how far his neglect of her, in his pursuit of gain, has deadened in her heart all domestic sympathies and family ties. He is told by Tubal that she has parted with his “turquoise.” It was a ring, a love-token, given him in the days of his courtship, by his Leah, the memory of whom seems the only sweet feeling in his hard and arid nature. This ring was to him of inestimable value, for it was the representative of a thousand memories, the priceless riches of the heart; but to Jessica, who had grown up without culture of the domestic affections, it had no moral value whatever: to her, it is only a trinket and she exchanges it for a — *monkey*! The cry of anguish that bursts from the Jew, when told of this, discloses how keenly he feels the want of sympathy on the part of his child, that could lead her to so painfully false a valuation.

“Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal; it was my turquoise: I had it of Leah, when I was a bachelor; I *would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.*”

The character of Antonio, likewise, presents an example of the disappointment and unhappiness that spring from an overesti-



mate of that which has no solid value. Antonio, the merchant of Venice, a man of great wealth, beloved by his friends and seemingly possessed of all that can render life pleasant is, nevertheless, afflicted with a deep sadness, for which he can assign no cause. But the reader is permitted to know him better than he knows himself. Antonio's pride is to be a "royal merchant." He prizes wealth, not in a miserly spirit, for he is munificent in the extreme, but for the consideration it gives him, — nay, for this very munificence. It is his pride to come "smug upon the mart," as Shylock invidiously describes him, and "to lend money for a *Christian courtesy*." Life has no value for him unless accompanied by riches. To be poor is, in his estimation, to be wretched. He so far overestimates the goods of Fortune that he stakes his happiness upon possessing them. In his desire to increase his wealth, he has ventured his whole estate upon the risks of a single year. A merchant in the largest sense, he has sent his ships to every quarter of the world. Hitherto fortune has favored him, but a doubt now arises in his mind whether mischance may not overtake him. A sense of coming loss oppresses him. He has listened to whisperings in the soul that admonish him how transitory are the gifts of Fortune, how hollow the expectations that are built upon them. And so deeply is he "affected" — though unconsciously to himself — with a sense of this unreality that the world itself appears to him but a shadowy pageant, and he says to Gratiano : —

"I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano ;  
A stage, where every man must play his part,  
And mine a sad one."

A presentiment of misfortune, inspired by unbroken prosperity — a feeling beautifully exemplified by the ancients in the tale of the ring of Polycrates — has cast its shadow upon his soul, and the gaunt spectre of poverty has stalked into his imagination. Even the sympathy and gayety of his friends, who try to rally him out of his sadness, fail to lighten the load this apprehension lays upon him. Yet he does not admit, even to himself, that he entertains this fear ; he denies that "he is sad to think upon his merchandise," or that his whole fortune is at stake, but immediately afterward, when applied to by Bassanio for a loan (which brings the question to a practical test) he says : —

"Thou knowest all my fortunes are at sea,  
Neither *have I money nor commodity*  
To raise a present sum," etc.

Besides, the result, ending in his total ruin, attests the fact.

This character not only exhibits an instance of false valuation, in the undue exaltation given to external fortune as a source of happiness over the inward resources of the soul, — a veritable sacrifice of the essential to the accidental, — but it is also conceived with exquisite skill in view of the part Antonio has afterwards to play. For when, after having lost his wealth, he falls into the power of the Jew, he rather welcomes death than avoids it. He has lost all that, in his estimation, makes life valuable, and yields to his fate with scarce a struggle. His worst anticipations have proved true, and death has no terrors for him. He tells Bassanio: —

"For herein Fortune shows herself more kind  
Than is her custom. It is still her use  
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,  
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow  
An age of poverty, from which ling'ring penance  
Of such a misery doth she cut me off."

This disposition of Antonio gives an air of probability to his unparalleled spirit of self-sacrifice, and arms him with that "patience" and "quietness of spirit," that Christian gentleness, which brings out with greater dramatic effect "the tyranny and rage" of the Jew.

If it were now the fashion, as it was in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for preachers to illustrate their discourses by profane stories and allegories, they could not do better, while preaching from sectarian pulpits the love of one's neighbor, than to point to the story of Antonio and Shylock as an example of the hateful traits of human character originating in a want of Christian love and tolerance; and it may be noted that so powerful an influence has this dramatic example exercised among all English-speaking people that "Shylock" and his "pound of flesh" is a proverbial phrase for a cruel creditor and his pitiless exactions.

The trial scene is another striking exemplification of the fundamental principle of the play in the adherence of the Court to the letter of the law to the utter sacrifice of its spirit. The Court of Venice, it would seem, had a superstitious regard for precedent.

For the sake of giving assurance to the many strangers that traded with the city, it was the policy of the Venetian law that all commercial forfeitures should be enforced to the very letter. This was the law, and

“There was no power in Venice  
That could alter a decree established.”

This point is enforced with unusual care, as well because it brings into stronger relief the absurdity of the principle as because it is the means of developing and punishing the vindictiveness of the Jew. He threatens

“To impeach the State  
If they deny him justice ; twenty magnificos  
Of greatest port have all persuaded with him,  
But none can drive him from his envious plea  
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.”

It is manifest to all that Shylock's clamor for justice is but to convert the law into an instrument of his revenge. He rests his claim solely upon arbitrary right, upon the force and validity given to a scrap of writing and a waxen seal ; and he hopes to gain his ends through the inability of the fixed letter of the law to mould itself to the equitable circumstances of the case. No conscientious scruples may be admitted ; and the interest of the scene is derived from the attempts that are made to induce the Jew to relinquish the extreme rights, which the formal rules of an artificial system give him, by pointing out to him his duty towards a fellow-being under the broad and universal principles of natural equity and forbearance. The Duke urges upon him with great weight that it is the law of “human gentleness and love” which should govern his conduct in such a case ; but Shylock's experience has not prepared him for an easy reception of such a principle. He doubts, too, the validity of it ; he affects to believe that men are governed by humors, whims, and constitutional antipathies ; in short, by what is individual and peculiar to themselves, and not by any universal principle of love for one another ; and scruples not to affirm that, in his own case, —

“It is a *lodgèd hate* and *certain loathing*  
He bears Antonio, that he follows thus  
A losing suit against him,” —

a direct antithesis of love of one's neighbor.



The danger in which Antonio stands from the malice of the Jew brings into contrast the worthlessness of money with the value men give to those things on which they set their hearts. This appears in the disdain with which Portia offers to pay the "*petty debt*," as soon as she learns that a friend of her husband is bound to the Jew : —

"*Por.* What sum owes he the Jew ?

*Bass.* For me, three thousand ducats.

*Por.*

What, no more ?

*Pay him six thousand and deface the bond :*

*Double six thousand and then treble that*

*Before a friend of this description*

*Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault."*

On the other hand, the Jew, avaricious as he is, holds in this instance money light in comparison with the gratification of his revenge.

"*If every ducat in six thousand ducats*

*Were in six parts and every part a ducat*

*I would not draw them. I would have my bond."*

Bassanio appeals to the Judge to decide upon the equity of the case.

"I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er

On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.

If this will not suffice, it must appear

That *malice bears down truth*. And, I beseech you,

*Wrest once the law to your authority :*

*To do a great right, do a little wrong ;*

And curb this cruel devil of his will."

But Portia is inflexible in her respect for precedent, and tells him, —

"'T will be *recorded for a precedent ;*

And many an *error by the same example*

Will rush into the State : *it cannot be."*

Shylock, on his side, justifies his pursuit of a technical advantage by citing other cases of glaring infractions of natural right, strenuously upheld by law.

"You have among you *many a purchas'd slave*

Which, like *your asses and your dogs and mules,*

*You use in abject and in slavish parts*

*Because you bought them.* Shall I say to you,

Let them be free, marry them to your heirs ?

Why sweat they under burthens ? let their beds  
 Be made as soft as yours and let their palates  
 Be season'd with such viands ? you will answer,  
*The slaves are ours :* So do I answer you :  
*The pound of flesh, which I demand of him*  
*Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it,"* etc.

This argument is valid so far as law and precedent can make it so ; but Portia states the true rule and places her appeal to the Jew for mercy on the ground that all men, through a common frailty, stand in need of mercy ; still, what effect could this plea have upon Shylock ? What practical teaching had he ever had of such a rule ? When had he ever been commiserated in misfortune ? Besides, his Jewish mind, educated in strict observance of ritual and type to the loss of spirit and essence, will not look beyond the literal interpretation of his bond. It is not surprising, therefore, that he is willing to take his chance of the severity which he inflicts upon others being visited upon himself, and defiantly says : —

"My deeds upon my head. *I crave the law.*"

Portia, once more, endeavors to reach his avarice, and offers him thrice the amount of his debt. If he refuses, it will be made clear that he does not wish for justice, but is seeking Antonio's life. The wily Jew, who wishes to stand fair with the Judge, perceives this drift, but adroitly escapes the inference that might be drawn from his declining so very liberal an offer by adverting to an obligation he is under, which all must admit has for him a value to outweigh, not merely his debt, but even the wealth of the whole State.

"*An oath, an oath, I have an oath in Heaven.*

*Shall I lay perjury upon my soul ?*

*No, not for Venice."*

The strict interpretation that gives Shylock judgment, though leading to the absurdity of permitting a murder under color of law, yet enforces the contract, and so far is consistent with itself ; but being pushed a little further, it leads to the second and, if possible, greater absurdity of defeating itself by coupling with the judgment a condition that renders its enforcement impossible. It is but an illustration of the rule that extremes pass into their contraries. It saves Antonio's life, it is true, but it is at the expense of all law and the denial of all justice ; nay, more, it is at the



expense of Shylock's life, unless saved by that mercy of which he had so arrogantly thought himself in no need. By the reaction inherent in the nature of every wrong, the law, which Shylock had called upon to execute his malice, recoils upon his own head, and proves his destruction. Like the evil magician in the German story, he summons a demon for his wicked purposes on condition of providing him with a victim, and, failing in this, falls himself a prey to the power he had evoked.

The value thus given to the letter of the law goes deeper than a mere principle of commercial policy. It is the spirit of conservatism, which clings to law and custom, however antiquated or effete, and seeks to fetter, in permanent forms, the many-shaping, ever-shifting life which alone gives form validity. Abstracted from personal and selfish considerations, it is, no doubt, noble in its origin, as it springs from an instinctive reverence for the right and true, but in its overestimate of the value of precedent it takes no heed of the dictates of the everlasting law of progress innate in man. The restless soul, in its unquenchable thirst for novelty, is ever embodying itself in new forms and manifesting itself in new action ; yet as it ever finds fruition a disappointment, it hurries onward after some fresh object of desire. This disposition to change and to innovate, which, as the opposite of conservatism, furnishes an æsthetic counterpoise to the influence of example and precedent, so largely involved in the incidents of the piece, finds expression in the following lines, the imagery and diction of which are beautifully characteristic of residents of a gay and commercial city. It is, moreover, a bit of inductive reasoning, and closes with an "illustrative example."

*Salar.* O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly  
To seal love's bonds new made, than they are wont  
To keep obliged faith unforfeited !  
*Gra.* That ever holds ; who riseth from a feast,  
With that keen appetite that he sits down ?  
Where is the horse that doth untread again  
His tedious measures with the unabated fire  
That he did pace them first ? All things that are,  
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.  
How like a younger or a prodigal  
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,  
Hugg'd and embracèd by the strumpet wind !  
How like a prodigal doth she return,



With overweather'd ribs and ragged sails,  
Lean, rent and beggar'd by the strumpet wind ! ”

It is this law of progress, taking the impulse of the hour for its rule of action, that is at war with that idolatry of form which strives to bind down the bursting life and new development of the present moment in the chains of a dead and obsolete past ; even as Portia with a heart full of love and longing is fettered in the dearest wishes of her soul by the will of her dead father. But Portia is a good conservative ; she is too wise not to know that “to do ” is not so easy “as to know what ’tis good to do,” that “a hot temper leaps over a cold decree,” and that the “naughty times” require a stricter rule than can be found in the impulses of so erring a creature as man, even though that rule does sometimes “put bars betwixt the owners and their rights.” She believes, with Nerissa, that “holy men have virtuous inspirations,” and that their injunctions must, by a moral necessity, work to happy issues. Therefore, though her happiness is seemingly put at stake by the terms of her father’s will, in a matter wherein in all reason and by every maxim of morality she might claim a free choice and a right to follow the impulses of her own nature, she still with filial veneration and true respect for authority avows her obedience.

“If I live to be as old as Sybilla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father’s will.”

The authority of Portia’s father rests on his wisdom, virtue, and parental affection. He purposes the welfare of his child and is wise enough to secure it. He has “holy inspirations.” The relation that exists between him and her is a real thing and not an empty form, and it is this that secures Portia’s loyalty to his authority.

In this feature of the drama, and, in fact, in the whole conduct of the plot referring to the caskets, the allegorical character of the original story is delicately preserved without at all impairing the dramatic interest of the piece as a picture of reality, yet we plainly see that the incidents are emblematic of moral truths.

Contrasted with Portia is Jessica, who represents the free, the spontaneous, and insubordinate, and whose affections are estranged from her father by his parsimony and moroseness. She had for him neither love nor respect ; nor does he consider her feelings or

her welfare. He would immure her in his cheerless mansion and deprive her of all enjoyments suitable to her age. The relation which exists between them has become an empty form, utterly void of all the sentiment or affection which should constitute its essence and give it a moral value. Jessica places upon this empty husk of parental relationship no false estimate; her soul is at strife between filial duty and her love for Lorenzo; she obeys the impulses of the latter as being a substantial thing, and finds her happiness in becoming "a Christian and a loving wife."

Portia is a model of excellence. There is not a quality nor an attribute that can lend a charm to woman, or worth to character, which she does not possess. She has virtue, wisdom, wit, beauty, love, courtesy, goodness, eloquence, with every adventitious advantage of wealth, birth, culture, station, — all which combine to form a woman such that

"The poor rude world  
Hath not her fellow."

She is the graceful exponent of the highest value; the symbol of true worth among the false and factitious; the ideal of all that is best worth having, and which men strive to attain as the aim of their aspirations and the sum of their happiness.

The original casket story was a religious allegory, but the dramatist, in interweaving it as a part of his play with the old tale of the lady of Belmont, has given it a more worldly cast and an application quite different from that of the original story. Who and what is Portia?

"In Belmont is a lady richly left,  
And she is fair and fairer than that word  
Of wondrous virtues. . . .  
Her name is Portia, *nothing undervalued*  
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia."

The Roman Portia, daughter of Cato, wife of Brutus, the great exemplar of woman's constancy, fortitude, and virtue, is adduced here as the type of the highest moral worth; and the poet's Portia is "nothing undervalued" to her. But who deserves her? Who shall be accounted worthy of the highest reward that can be bestowed upon earthly merit through the possession of virtue, beauty, wisdom, wealth, and all the happiness they can bestow? Her wise father had made provision that none can win her without desert. He had made her hand depend upon the right

choice of one of three caskets ; and, looking deep into moral causes and effects, he had so contrived the test of his daughter's suitors that none could make the right selection but one " who she should rightly love." Her renown has gone abroad throughout the world, and the most distinguished of the earth seek her mansion at Belmont to try their fortunes for her hand.

" Nor is the *wide world ignorant of her worth,*  
 For the four winds blow in from every coast  
 Renowned suitors ; and her sunny locks  
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece  
 Which makes *her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,*  
 And many *Jasons come in quest of her.*"

And again she is thus spoken of : —

" From the *four corners of the earth they come,*  
 To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.  
 The *Hyrcean deserts* and the *vasty wilds*  
 Of *wide Arabia,* are as through-fares now,  
 For *princes to come view fair Portia :*  
 The *wat'ry kingdom,* whose ambitious head  
 Spits in the face of heaven, *is no bar*  
 To stop the *foreign spirits,* but *they come*  
 As *o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.*"

This is not a description of a lady merely, but of some paragon of excellence or worth, which is the aim and object of all men's desires.

And who are these "renowned suitors," these adventurous "Jasons"? Setting aside those enumerated by Nerissa as worthless shows, empty forms of men, absorbed in low and frivolous pursuits, with neither the courage nor the virtue nor the elevation of character to attempt to win the lady, we have, first, the noble and chivalric prince of Morocco. He is a famous warrior, and has so far a sense of true value that he asks to be judged not by his complexion, "the shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun," but by his inward virtue, the redness of his blood, the symbol of courage and daring. There is about him a barbaric love of pomp and display, a swell and inflation of thought and expression, characteristic of his Moorish origin. To his ostentatious and haughty temper gold appears the mark and appurtenance of rank and sovereignty, and we detect how really low is his standard of excellence, how factitious his estimate of things in his



disdain at the supposition that the lady of his love can be enshrined in metal less worthy than gold.

“Is ’t like that lead contains her?”

he asks, and answers his own question, —

“’T were damnation

*To think so base a thought. . . .*

Or shall I think in silver she ’s immur’d

*Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?”*

He hopes to show himself worthy of the highest reward of true deserving by boasting of his valor, and recounting his exploits; and swears by his scimitar, —

“That slew the Sophi and a Persian prince

That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,

I would out-stare the sternest eyes that look,

Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,

Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,

To win thee, lady.”

But when, in obedience to his moral instincts, he selects the golden casket, what does all this glory and renown, this ferocity and courage, prove to be worth? “A carrion death,” a skull whose empty eye contains a scroll with the pithy moral that “all that glisters is not gold,” and teaching the great warrior that he had not deserved nor won the highest excellence when he had gained fame by his sword; that his “labor was lost,” and he had mistaken the shadow for the substance.

In the “moral” attached to the original story, we find this explanation: “By the first vessell of gold full of dead men’s bones we shall understand some worldly men, both mighty men and rich, who outwardly shine in gold, in riches and pompes of the world; nevertheless within they be full of dead men’s bones, that is, the works they have wrought in this world be dead in the sight of God.”

The next suitor is the prince of Arragon. He has no greatness of heart, no warlike exploits to boast of, no chivalric admiration even for the lady. He is of a proud, cold, calculating temperament. He expects to make up by subtlety of brain what he lacks in warmth of heart. Too timid and selfish to hazard anything, he passes the threatening leaden casket at once; at the same time he is too discerning to be caught by the glare of gold.

He leaves that to the "fool multitude," "the common spirits," with whom he scorns to be classed. Fond of compromise, like all men of his class, he takes the middle course and chooses the silver chest. And what wins he, this man so deep, so politic, so deserving in his own conceit? A fool's head, "the portrait of a blinking idiot."

"Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?" he querulously asks. Truly that is all that is merited by him who expects to compass love and virtue and happiness by a scheming brain and a cold heart. Well does the scroll inform him: —

"Seven times tried that judgment is  
That did never judge amiss.  
Some there be that shadows kiss,  
Such have but a shadow's bliss," etc.

Portia's comment places in an epigram the whole class to which Arragon belongs.

"O these *deliberate fools*! when they do choose,  
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose."

The "moral" to the original story has this passage: "By the said vessell of silver, we ought to understand some *justices* and *wise men* of this world, which shine in fair speech," etc. It is obvious how much elegance and propriety the poet, while adhering to the purport of the allegory, has added to it.

Next comes Bassanio, a soldier, a scholar, and a gentleman, with neither the ferocity of the conqueror nor the craft of the politician, but with honor, virtue, generosity, nobleness, and, above all, with a love of true worth and ability to discern it under any disguise. Undeceived by false glitter or false valuation and following the instincts of a true heart, he makes choice, inevitably, of the right casket and thus justifies the will of Portia's father and the comment of Nerissa upon it.

"Your father was ever virtuous: and holy men have at their death good inspirations; therefore the lottery he hath devised in these three chests, of gold, silver, and lead (whereof who choose his meaning, chooses you) will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly, but one who you shall rightly love."

Related to the sacrifice of the substance to the shadow is the neglect of the matter for the word.

"The fool hath planted in his memory  
An army of good words, — and I do know  
A many fools, that stand in better place  
Garnished like him, that *for a tricky word*  
*Defy the matter.*"

Such is the comment of Lorenzo upon Launcelot's "quarreling with occasion" by "wit-snapping" and twisting the word away from the matter of the discourse, thus furnishing an illustration of a principle analogous to false valuation. This principle gives us the character of Gratiano, a gay, laughing, noisy youth, an incessant talker, who "speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are two grains of wheat, hid in two bushels of chaff," etc. He has much good sense and much observation of life, but his fancy is so active, "his spirit so skipping," that in describing the plainest matter he pours out a flood of metaphor and imagery that almost overwhelms his thought and gives an air of extravagance to all he says. His character, gay, happy, and heedless, is a foil to the sad Antonio on the one side and to the deadly Jew on the other. His florid and diffuse rhetoric is a fine contrast and relief to the plain, direct, incisive style of Shylock.

But the neglect of the matter for the word is chiefly exemplified in good Launcelot Gobbo. Witness his soliloquy, in which he argues the question between his conscience and the fiend as to the propriety of his running away from the Jew, — a burlesque precursor of the motives that struggle in the mind of Jessica.

"The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying '*Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot or good Gobbo or good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away;*' My conscience says, *No, take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo; or, as aforesaid, honest Launcelot Gobbo, do not run,*" etc.

An amusing instance of the multiplication of words to the darkening of the matter is the scene in which Gobbo and his father solicit Bassanio for service. The whole matter is comprised in *two* words, but they contrive between them, while affecting great brevity, to expend nearly *two hundred* before they come to the point.

"*Gobbo.* Here's my son, sir, a poor boy —

*Laun.* Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man, that would, sir, as my father shall specify —

*Gobbo.* He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve —

*Laun.* Indeed, the *short and the long is*, I serve the Jew and have a desire, as my father shall specify —

*Gobbo.* His master and he (saving your worship's reverence) are scarce cater-cousins.

*Laun.* To be brief, the very truth is, that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being I hope an old man, shall frutify unto you —



Gobbo. I have here a dish of doves, that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is —

Laun. *In very brief*, the suit is impertinent," etc.

Bassanio, losing patience, at last interrupts them : —

"One speak for both. What would you ?

Laun. *Serve you, sir.*"

That is all, "*serve you*," but old Gobbo must needs add, — what the whole scene had proved, — "That's *the very defect of the matter*, sir."

What *prejudice* is in feeling and opinion, *precedent* frequently is in law, *i. e.* a prejudgment (*præjudicium*) upon narrow and perhaps unanalogical grounds of a question which should be decided upon the broadest principles of tolerance and equity. This comedy illustrates these points in the most vivid manner; representing the world as made up of a variety of races, creeds, and nationalities, each with its predominant idiosyncrasies and affections, which generate mutual hatreds and prejudices that constantly violate the broad humanity inculcated by the Christian exemplar. And in keeping with this style of characterization the dramatist introduces incidental sketches and examples of curious antipathies or sympathies — as the case may be; such, for instance, as Salarino's "strange fellows."

"Some who will evermore peep through their eyes  
And laugh, like parrots, at a bag-piper;  
And others of such vinegar aspect  
They will not shew their teeth in way of smile  
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable."

Of the same kind is Gratiano's description of "Sir Oracle" (Act I. Sc. 1), Portia's comments on the moral likeness, through force of sympathy, between Antonio and her husband (Act III. Sc. 4), as well as her sketch of "bragging Jacks" (Act III. Sc. 4); also Shylock's argument drawn from several curious cases of constitutional antipathies (Act IV. Sc. 1), Lorenzo's account of the power of music over the passions, the latent sympathy of our souls with the harmony of the spheres, together with his delineation of the unmusical man, whose "affections" are "dark as Erebus" (Act V. Sc. 1). Similar examples of strange biases of temper and mind are the characters of the suitors whom Nerissa enumerates (Act I. Sc. 2) and Portia describes. Among all these eccentricities Bassanio and Portia are the only

ones who retain their justness of thought and moderation of sentiment.

The peculiar dispositions thus depicted, and others, which strongly affect the judgments of the characters are the source of those errors and false conclusions, which Bacon calls "idols;" either of "the tribe," which proceed from an "infusion into the mind of the affections" (Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 49), or of "the cave" "which take their rise in the peculiar constitution, mental or bodily, of each individual" (Aph. 53), and of which he says "our spirits are included in the caves of our own *complexions* and *customs*, which minister unto us infinite errors and vain opinions" (Adv. p. 278). Particular instances of these need not be cited; every scene of the piece illustrates them.

The merchant lives in a world of ventures, and relies for success upon correctly calculating the probabilities of the future from experience and analogy. In this respect, however, the merchant is but the type of all other men, for all men build their hope of success upon the expectation that events will follow in the future as they have done in the past. All the characters of the piece are concerned with the hazards of the future, and endeavor to anticipate the issues of their actions by appeals to experience. This is notably the case with the suitors, while meditating upon a choice of the caskets; their methods are exclusively inductive, and they seek to guide their judgments and justify their choice by their knowledge of the world and of similar cases; though, it may be observed, Morocco and Arragon are biased by their affections, the one by his love of show, the other by conceit of his own discernment, while Bassanio, by inducting a number of instances to prove the deceptiveness of ornament, escapes the danger and wins the prize.

Yet in this mode of reasoning there is always risk of the judgment being misled by false resemblances where no real analogy exists, or by overlooking a real similitude hidden by a wide difference in unessential particulars. Out of these errors arise those mistaken judgments which, in forecasting the future, attribute events to erroneous causes or to circumstances which are only concomitant of the real cause, as in the case of omens, dreams, and other superstitious prognostics. Even so practical a man as Shylock fears the augury of a dream. He says, —



"There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,  
For I did dream of money-bags to-night," etc.

which case of false induction prompts Launcelot's parody, —

"I will not say you shall see a masque ; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black Monday last at six o'clock in the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year in the afternoon."

By giving his characters this mental constitution, the poet makes his piece a repertory of instances of judgments and estimates founded on induction, both true and false ; and in fact it may be taken (though written and produced several years before Bacon had ever published any work on Philosophy) to illustrate Bacon's "Art of Judgment," as laid down in *De Augmentis* and *Novum Organum*.

"The Art of Judgment," says Bacon, "handles the nature of proofs and demonstrations. In this art the conclusion is made either by *induction* or syllogism. For enthymemes and *examples* are but abridgments of these two." De Aug. Book V. ch. iv.

Examples are of two sorts, real and invented. The real are drawn from actual matter of fact, such as historical events and persons, which may be pointed to as examples in some particular, as when Shylock affirms the excellence of Portia as a Judge, by exclaiming, —

"A *Daniel* come to judgment, yea, a *Daniel*."

The invented are fables and illustrations ; they are very similar in character, a fable being a short story in point ; and, when well known, a word or two suffices to introduce it ; as Portia, ordering the music to cease, gives a fanciful reason for it by an allusion to the fable of Endymion : —

"Peace, ho ! the *moon sleeps with Endymion*  
*And would not be awak'd !*"

Illustrations, also, are allusions to well-known stories and personages, particularly such as are representative, as the gods and goddesses of heathen mythology, each of whom is a pattern or representative of some quality or virtue or vice, and furnishes a standard of comparison, as in the phrase, "If I *live to be old as Sybilla*, I will die *as chaste as Diana*," etc.

Under this head will fall metaphor and allusion, with which the piece abounds.



Example, taken in its widest sense, comprehends the arguments called *Induction*, *Experience*, *Analogy*, *Parity of Reasoning*, "all of which," says Whateley, "are essentially the same, for in all arguments designated by these names it will be found that we consider one or more known individual objects or instances of a class as fair *specimens* in respect of some point or other of that class, and consequently draw an inference from them respecting the whole class or other less known individuals."

Numerous instances of these arguments, both true and false, have already been given, but a few more will be cited in order to show how thoroughly inductive are the mental habits of the characters, and how completely the idea of an example is diffused through all parts of the play.

The following argument proves from example the wisdom of following example:—

"In my school days, when I had lost one shaft,  
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight  
The self-same way, with more advised watch,  
To find the other forth; and by adventuring both  
I oft found both; I urge this childhood proof,  
Because what follows is pure innocence.  
I owe you much; and, like a willful youth,  
That which I owe is lost; but if you please  
To shoot another arrow that self-way  
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,  
As I will watch the aim, or to find both,  
Or bring your latter hazard back again  
And thankfully rest debtor for the first."

Act I. Sc. 1.

Shylock justifies his taking usury by the example of Jacob winning by artifice the increase of Laban's flock, as by another fraud he had cheated Esau out of his birthright, or, as Shylock phrases it, "as his *wise mother wrought in his behalf*," on which false analogy Antonio justly observes:—

"Mark you this, Bassanio;  
The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose."

During Bassanio's choice of the caskets, Portia's excited feelings and vivid imagination find utterance in a passage made up of parable, metaphor, and illustration:—

"Let music sound while he doth make his choice;  
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,

Fading in music. That the comparison  
 May stand more just, my eye shall be the stream  
 And watery death-bed for him. He may win ;  
 And what is music then ? then music is  
 Even as the flourish when the subjects bow  
 To a new-crownèd monarch ; such it is  
 As are those dulcet sounds in break of day  
 That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear  
 And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,  
 With no less presence but with much more love  
 Than young Alcides, when he did redeem  
 The virgin-tribute paid by howling Troy  
 To the sea-monster : I stand for sacrifice,  
 The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,  
 With blearèd visages, come forth to view  
 The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules !  
 Live thou, I live," etc.

Act III. Sc. 2.

A common form of error produced by "affection" is the judging of the motives of others by our own feelings in like circumstances. Shylock notes this : —

"O Father Abraham ! what these Christians are !  
 Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect  
 The thoughts of others."

Act I. Sc. 3.

Morocco, lamenting that the choice of the casket is to be determined by fortune and not by merit, illustrates his meaning by an apt allusion to the story of Hercules and Lichas : —

"If Hercules and Lichas play at dice  
 Which is the better man, the greater throw  
 May turn by fortune from the weaker hand ;  
 So is Alcides beaten by his page," etc.

Act II. Sc. 1.

Portia infers a similarity and proportion, both physical and mental, between Antonio and Bassanio, from their mutual love : —

"For in companions  
 That do converse and waste the time together,  
 Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,  
 There must needs be a like proportion  
 Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit ;  
 Which makes me think that this Antonio,  
 Being the bosom-lover of my lord,  
 Must needs be like my lord," etc.

Act III. Sc. 4.

Antonio cites the following analogous cases to show the uselessness of appealing to Shylock for mercy : —

“ You may as well go stand upon the beach,  
And bid the main flood ’bate his usual height ;  
You may as well use question with the wolf  
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb ;  
You may as well forbid the mountain-pines  
To wag their high tops and to make no noise  
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven ;  
You may as well do anything most hard  
As seek to soften that (than which what’s harder)  
His Jewish heart.”

Act IV. Sc. 1.

The foregoing specimens are, probably, sufficient to show how the style of the piece is moulded by example.

All of Shylock’s reasoning is drawn from illustrations and examples, but most of them are instances of false analogies.

Most critics have remarked upon the rich poetic coloring this play possesses, but it is apparent that this is owing to the poet’s fidelity to his “idea,” which requires a profuse exhibition of similitude and illustration.

In accordance, moreover, with the idea of a story that is taken as a text to illustrate a moral doctrine, the personages of the piece habitually moralize and preach, so to speak, upon events and the persons around them. Thus Gratiano, marking Antonio’s sadness, reads him a lecture upon the folly of affecting gravity in order to obtain a reputation for wisdom, a bit of advice of which the levity is rather enhanced than otherwise by a Scriptural allusion : —

“ O my Antonio, I do know of those  
That, therefore, only are reputed wise  
For saying nothing ; who, I am very sure,  
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,  
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.”

Act I. Sc. 1.

Gratiano himself calls his remarks “an *exhortation*.” Of a like kind is Bassanio’s reproof of Gratiano for “being too wild, too rude, and bold of voice,” and Gratiano’s promise to amend and affect the behavior of one religiously inclined.

“ *Grat.* If I do not put on a sober habit,  
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then ;  
Wear prayer-books in my pocket ; look demurely ;



Nay, more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes  
 Thus with my hat and sigh, and say amen ;  
 Use all the observance of civility,  
 Like one well-studied in a sad ostent  
 To please his grandam, never trust me more."

Act II. Sc. 2.

Another instance is Lorenzo's remarks on music, concluding with the well-known moral : —

"The man that hath no music in his soul," etc.

Act V. Sc. 1.

The caskets also contain scrolls with pithy morals on the folly of the choosers. And other instances might be cited. Even the jokes of the play have a Scriptural and doctrinal turn ; as Gobbo's argument that Jessica is damned because the sins of the father are visited upon the children ; or his debate between his conscience and the fiend whether he shall run away from his master the Jew, who is "the very devil incarnation."

In all this the poet maintains the nicest balance between the moralizing feature of the old stories and a dramatic style, making the note of moral and religious sentiment just prominent enough to accord with the idea of an illustrative example, without trenching too far upon the dramatic requirements of the play.

These moral reflections heighten also the effect of the gay and light-hearted manners of the youthful personages of the piece, as they indicate in them a recognition of the deeper and more serious side of life.

But may it not be conjectured that in the same way that the story on which the play is founded has a "moral" appended to it, the play also has one to which the fortunes of the characters have a direct and distinct reference. All critics agree that the action of the piece terminates with the fourth act, the catastrophe of the play being the defeat of the Jew through his want of "human gentleness and love." The interest of the story ends there, and the fifth act is without action and is taken up only with the reunion of Portia and Bassanio at Belmont, which in itself has no dramatic interest and follows as a matter of course ; for the matrimonial fate of Portia had been decided before the trial of the question on the bond was brought forward, and it is this latter which gives the piece its overwhelming interest ; when this is ended, the piece is ended. What, then, justifies the fifth

act? Is it not the adherence of the poet to the literary "form" on which he works, namely, of a story, like those of the *Gesta Romanorum*, to which a moral is appended? But as the story itself is made dramatic, so also must the "moral" be represented in life and action. The story we have seen inculcates love and kindness in human intercourse; the "moral," then, will exhibit the happy effect of these emotions in practice.

The scene is appropriate; it is Belmont, the ideal of an elegant and refined abode. The moon shines bright, "making the night a paler day," which by its fitness for all sweet thoughts and memories suggests to the lovers that stray in the garden-paths many a story of love that had bechanced on "such a night" (and observe that these stories are examples which, while in keeping with the idea of the piece and thus preserving its unity, have an effect like a change of key after the stormy passions of the fourth act), "Music creeps in at the ears" sounding doubly sweet, for

"Soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony,"

and awakening that full feeling which lifts the thoughts above the earth "to the orbs that in their motion sing," and to "the harmony that is in immortal souls." Portia enters and adds to so much that is delightful to the sense, the sentiment of benignity and love that are associated with the errand of mercy from which she returns. Her presence lends a moral beauty to the beauty of the night, and her graceful mind imparts a new charm to the music and a fresh lustre to the moonlight by associating them with thoughts which give them human sympathy and interest. Antonio, happy in his rescue from the Jew, and Bassanio, doubly happy in his friend and his wife, are present to swell the full tide of joyful emotion. Everything is accordant, time, place, persons, and occasion.

But to enliven this monotone and give some dramatic interest to the closing scene, there follows the pleasant banter of their husbands by Portia and Nerissa, for giving away the rings they had sworn to keep (a final illustration of the higher law of gratitude and love overriding the letter of the promise), the affected displeasure of the wives serving but to prepare the way for increased happiness and greater mirth when the explanation ensues. And thus this delightful comedy closes with a full chord of joy, congratulation, and love.



The fifth act, therefore, which is without dramatic action, and, though comic in matter, is ethical in tone, may very well be assumed as "the moral" of the plot.

Thus viewed on its artistic and moral side, the play is clearly a piece modeled upon the idea of a story designed as an example or lesson in life; but viewed also on its intellectual side, that is, with respect to the intellectual and logical qualities of its personages, it bears a striking analogy to those *exemplaria* which Bacon projected as illustrations of his Inductive Method. It is a "Table of Enquiry" in action.

To set forth his method by examples, or what he calls "Tables of Enquiry and Invention," was a purpose long meditated by Bacon. He speaks of it in his *Cogitata et Visa* (1609): —

"After deep and long meditation," he says, "it appeared to him especially advisable that Tables of Discovery or formulas of a legitimate enquiry — that is, the mass of particulars pertinent to certain subjects arranged so that the intellect can readily operate upon them — should be set forth by way of example or *visible description*, as it were, of the work.<sup>1</sup>"

Afterwards, in 1622, in a letter to Bishop Andrews, he says, alluding to his *Novum Organum*, "I have just cause to doubt that it flies too high over men's heads. I have a purpose, therefore (though it break the order of time), to draw it down to the sense by some *Pattern* of a Natural Story and Inquisition;" and in the Latin translation he adds the words "*quod etiam ex parte feci*," i. e., he had already done it; and may possibly have done it as early as the date of *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>2</sup>

These Tables, or Patterns, are assigned in "The Plan of the Work" to the fourth and fifth parts of the Instauration, the former comprising those *exemplaria* which exhibited the true and legitimate method of Induction, and are thus described: —

"Examples of Inquiry and invention according to my method, exhibited by anticipation in some particular subjects; choosing such subjects as are at once the most noble in themselves among

<sup>1</sup> "Atque diu et acriter rem cogitanti et perpendenti ante omnia visum est ei Tabulas Inveniendi sive legitimæ Inquisitionis formulas (hoc est, materiem particularem ad opus intellectûs ordinatam) in aliquibus subjectis proponi tanquam ad exemplum et operis descriptionem fere visibilem."

<sup>2</sup> This letter shows that the example of an inquiry into the nature of heat, in the Second Book of the *Novum Organum*, is not altogether such a pattern of a Story and Inquisition as is here alluded to.



those under inquiry and most different one from another; that there may be an example in every kind. I do not speak of those examples which are joined to the several precepts and rules by way of illustration (for of these I have given plenty in the second part of the work), but I mean actual *types and models*, by which the entire process of the mind and the whole fabric and order of invention from the beginning to the end, in certain subjects and those various and remarkable, should be set, as it were, before the eyes. For I remember that in the mathematics it is easy to follow the demonstration when you have a machine beside you, whereas without that help all appears involved and more subtle than it really is. To examples of this kind, the fourth part of the work is devoted."

It is believed that the play of *Cymbeline* is a dramatic imitation of a pattern of this kind, showing the true and legitimate method of induction by exclusions and rejections.

The examples comprised in the fifth part were, no doubt, of the same nature so far as relates to subjects of inquiry and method of exemplifying by "placing actual types and models under the eyes," but they differed in that the inquisition did not proceed according to the strict formula of scientific induction (as laid down in the *Novum Organum*), but trusted to *that induction which the unaided powers of the mind makes when freed by caution and vigilance from impediment and error*.

He says: "I include in this fifth part such things as I have myself discovered, proved, or added, — not, however, according to the true rules and methods of interpretation, but *by the ordinary use of the understanding in inquiring and discovering*."

And in the *Novum Organum*, Book I. Aph. 116, he says: "On some special subjects and in an incomplete form I am in possession of results which I take to be far more true and more certain and withal more fruitful than those now received, *and these I have collected into the fifth part of my Instauration*."

From this it is apparent that at the time of writing the *Novum Organum* he had collected and prepared the examples that were to constitute the fifth part of his work; yet they never, as such, have been published.

It has been repeatedly stated that Bacon's method was as applicable to moral and intellectual subjects as to physical. Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 127.

A Table of Inquiry is made by collecting and arranging a sufficient number of instances of the subject under investigation, in such manner as to facilitate their examination and comparison, and so lead the mind to a sound conclusion ; but in a dramatic imitation of such a table, which must be generic in order that it may be an exemplar which will suit all cases, the topic of inquiry must be virtually the judgment itself, and exhibit it as led to either truth or error as it is guided by proof and induction on the one side or by passion and prejudice on the other.

To convert a play into an exemplar of this nature, it will be necessary to incorporate the chief characteristics of a Table of Inquiry into the movement, action, and dialogue of the piece. The *dramatis personæ* will be animated by a spirit of inquiry, and will have some definite object of which they are in quest and about which they will be greatly concerned in coming to a sound conclusion ; they will be guided in their reasoning by induction, by examples and similar cases cited as proofs and authorities, and having validity in proportion to their being founded on true or false analogies ; in the one case, leading to truth and success ; in the other, to error and failure.

The play is *The Merchant of Venice*, and, as the business of a merchant is the quest of value (*L. quæstus*), the subject of the play is the quest or inquiry of that which has the truest value and men should consider the greatest gain ; and as all valuations are judgments, such an inquiry involves one respecting the correct exercise of the judgment.

Without detailing the numerous instances, in which the notions of quest, inquiry, question, seeking, searching, interrogating and the like are introduced into the incidents and dialogue, — especially apparent in the all-important question on the bond, — it is sufficient to point out that the prominent characters of the leading story (for the bond story is but incidental to that of the caskets) are *suitors*, who, like Jasons in search of the fleece, go in *quest* of Portia (typical of a search for the highest value), and are especially concerned in making a right judgment in their choice of the caskets ; Portia, moreover, is won or lost as they respectively prize moral or material values. And so with the others ; Shylock's love of money through avarice, and Antonio's love of riches through a spirit of munificence, are both gross overvaluations of what is purely factitious ; Lorenzo, Jessica, even



Gobbo, are all in quest of some object, to which their desires attach a value that in their judgment outweighs duty ; while the most striking cases in the piece of false valuations, in which the essential is habitually sacrificed to the superficial, grow out of the mutual hate and prejudice of Jew and Christian, which color the sentiments, furnish the motives, and affect the fortunes of all the personages of the piece, with the exception of Bassanio and Portia, with whom material or factitious values are of no estimation by the side of moral worth.

And the play, therefore, contains a collection of instances of valuation, that is, of judgments on the value of men and things, which, according as they are true or false, are attended by happiness or by disappointment ; and, taken as a whole, it is an exemplar of a Table of Inquiry, presented in living and speaking images, who, in quest of value, exhibit a correct or incorrect exercise of judgment, respectively choosing the substantial or the factitious as they are guided by proof or perverted by prejudice ; on which whole array and presentation (like Bacon's "*materiem particularium ad opus intellectûs ordinatam*"), the mind is led to the "easy and spontaneous" conclusion<sup>1</sup> that the highest worth and most precious object of men's desires are truth and love, of which, in keeping with the allegory which is the source of the play, Portia is the outward visible representative.

And thus we see with what marvelous skill the artistic, dramatic, moral, philosophical, and poetic sides of the piece are made to "cluster and concur" in one total effect.

The happiness that follows the acquisition of the highest worth is thus described : —

"It is very meet

The lord Bassanio lead an upright life,  
For having such a blessing in his lady  
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth,  
And if on earth he does not mean it, it  
Is reason he should never come to heaven.  
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match,  
And on the wager lay two earthly women,  
And Portia one, there must be something else  
Pawn'd with the other ; for the poor rude world  
Hath not her fellow."

<sup>1</sup> "Interpretationem facilem jam et sponte sequentem, inomento fere præreptam." *Sententiæ*, xii. 10.



## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

THE constructive law, or to use the Baconian term, "the form" of this Comedy, seems to have been drawn from a class of writings which are, perhaps, best exemplified in "Books of Proverbs," and of which the essential nature lies in their being counsels for the regulation of conduct or rules of practice. Writings, however, of which the essential idea is a rule of action, must draw their matter from the practical side of life, which is occupied with works and tasks for the accomplishment of which directions and methods are indispensable; in such a world the discovery of a rule or rules for operating a desired effect is the one thing needful, and this is exemplified with more or less pertinency in the methods, good or bad, with which men strive to attain their purposes.

The most famous collection of rules of conduct is, no doubt, the *Proverbs*, or as they were sometimes called in Shakespeare's day, the *Parables*<sup>1</sup> of Solomon. Bacon so styles them and wrote interpretations of many of them. With him, for instance, the saying, "a soft answer turneth away wrath," is a parable; whence it would appear that he would apply the term to any wise saw or sententious proposition teaching a rule of action; and, no doubt, would have considered even the title of this comedy "All's Well that ends Well" a parable.

In ordinary parlance, a parable is a story which, in addition to the obvious meaning which it carries on its face, has a veiled or hidden meaning which is typified or imaged by what is represented.

There is ground for supposing this play a parable which wraps up in its letter an example of the application of Science to practical life, and also the more prominent features of Bacon's philosophical process. Of this process the aim and intent was to

<sup>1</sup> "The word *parable* is sometimes used in Scripture in a large and general sense, and applied to short sententious sayings, maxims, or aphorisms, expressed in a figurative, proverbial, or even poetical manner." *Porteus' Lectures*.

furnish helps to the mind in order to enable it to form a correct judgment; and the two leading characters of the piece, Helen and Bertram, are supposed to exhibit respectively the correct and incorrect exercise of that faculty.

The pith and marrow of Natural Philosophy is to discover the cause or "true difference" of things, or, as the *Novum Organum* (Book II. Aph. 1) has it, "Of a given nature to discover *the form or true difference* . . . is the work or aim of Human Knowledge." This is to discover the cause why a thing is what it is, and such discovery when made and expressed in words is an axiom for the production of the effect, and consequently a perfect rule of practice. A knowledge of the "true difference" is equivalent to that of the essential nature of a thing, for, in Hudibrastic phrase, it is

"To know what's what, and that's as high  
As metaphysic wit can fly."

It therefore determines the practical worth and use of a thing — or of a man.

This is represented in the play in characters and incidents that illustrate the discovery of men's real differences or essential natures, whereby are established their worth and efficiency, and their true titles to distinction.

The plot is suggested by a story of Boccaccio, but a large part of the play and the greater number of the *dramatis personæ* are of Shakespeare's own invention. The main incidents are the following: —

A Count of Rousillon, one of the great vassals of the King of France, dies leaving a widow and a son, Bertram, the heir to his title and estate. The Count had been attended by his physician, Gerard de Narbon, a man famous in his profession, but whose skill, great as it was, did not suffice to save the Count's life nor his own, for he too dies, leaving a daughter, Helen, to the care of the Countess. He also bequeathed to Helen certain receipts and remedies of rare value, which were the best fruits of his professional experience.

Helen had been reared in the family of the Count, and had conceived an intense love for Bertram, but this was a secret known only to her own heart.

The King is afflicted with a disease supposed to be incurable; nevertheless, being the feudal guardian of Bertram, he sends to

him an old courtier, Lafeu, with a command that he attend him at Court; whereupon Bertram leaves Rousillon for Paris. After his departure, Helen, in order to be near him, and also in the hope of possibly winning his hand, forms a plan of visiting Paris and offering her services to the King for the cure of his disease, — an undertaking not so extravagant as at the first glance it appears, — for among the remedies left her by her father, there is one especially suited to the King's case, and on its efficacy she is willing to stake even her life. In return, however, she demands that in case she restores the King to health, she shall have in marriage any one of the King's wards she may select; for by feudal law, the wards of the King were at his disposal in marriage.

Her plan succeeds; she restores the King to health, and, of course, selects Bertram as her husband; he at first revolts against marrying a physician's daughter as utterly derogatory to his rank, but under the threats of the King he gives her his hand; yet immediately after the nuptials he repudiates her and flies to Florence, where he takes service in the army of the Duke; he also sends a letter to Helen, in which he informs her that until she has performed certain apparently impossible conditions, he will not recognize her as a wife, and declares that "until he has no wife, he has nothing in France."

Helen, finding that she has driven him from his home and exposed him to the dangers of war, resolves to sacrifice all her own wishes to his welfare and betake herself to a religious house, for which purpose she enters on a pilgrimage to St. Jacques le Grand. Her route lies through Florence (whither she is also probably led by the hope of hearing something of Bertram), and there she learns that, although greatly distinguished as a soldier, he has, under the instigation of a corrupt companion, Parolles, entered on a profligate life, and is even then making dishonorable proposals to a young gentlewoman, named Diana Capulet, to whom he has promised marriage after the death of his wife. Having enlisted Diana and her mother in her service, Helen so manages that the Count's passion for Diana becomes the means of effecting the performance of the conditions on which he was to acknowledge her as a wife. She then spreads reports of her own death so skillfully as to induce the Count to return to Rousillon, whither she, together with Diana and her mother, follows



him. Diana gains access to the King, and accuses Bertram of having violated his promise to marry her; Bertram attempts to repel the charge, but the proofs make it clear that he is guilty, at which point Diana herself most unaccountably exculpates him, declaring that he has never wronged her, yet as stoutly asserting that he is guilty, thus wrapping the whole matter in mystery, of which there seems to be no explanation, until Helen, who has been mourned as dead, is brought in by Widow Capulet, and it becomes manifest that all of Diana's double meanings and contradictions grow out of the fact that Helen, in the guise of Diana, has secretly been the chief actor in the scheme, and that with Diana's collusion, she has performed the condition on which Bertram was to take her as a wife. Bertram, happy to escape the consequences of his course towards Diana, willingly receives Helen, and promises all the amends in his power.

This is one of those improbable and romantic fables in which Boccaccio delighted, and which, as he handles them, are made exponents of the power of love to inspire an industry and perseverance that can overcome all impediments. Shakespeare does not lose sight of the moral beauty shining through the strange and, in some respects, disagreeable incidents of the story, but he enlarges the plot, and makes it a vehicle of the philosophy of practical life, besides converting it into a parable which, whether intended for the purpose or not, exemplifies the prominent traits in Bacon's method of discovering the "true difference." In the following remarks, the play will be treated as a work of art, and also as a philosophical paradigm without keeping the two entirely distinct; in other words, it will be interpreted as a work of art in the light of the Baconian philosophy.

The proverb "All's well that ends well" is capable of various constructions; in one sense, it implies that final success will compensate for previous disaster; in another sense, it may mean that success will gild and palliate the means, however questionable, used to attain it. Through fear of such a result, Bacon doubts whether young men are fit auditors of matters of policy, at least until "they have been thoroughly seasoned in religion, morality, and duty, lest their *judgments be corrupted*, and made apt to think that there are *no true and real differences of things*, but *all things are to be measured by utility and fortune*, as the poet says, —

'Prosperum et felix seelus virtus vocatur,' —

and again, —

'Ille crucem pretium sceleris tulit, hic diadema,' —

which the poets speak satirically and in indignation, but some books of policy seriously and positively." De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.

Still, the maxim has its more moral side, and will apply, for instance, to the reformation of a youth who has been drawn into evil courses, but who afterwards makes amendment and reparation; but perhaps its greatest use as a rule of action, whether moral or politic, is in its being a spur to industry and perseverance; and, no doubt, it has frequently led to success in the face of the most discouraging obstacles. In this sense, it is particularly apposite as a title to this drama.

Notwithstanding its comic incidents, the piece has a serious tone; an elegiac note is struck in the opening scene, where the mortality of man and the inevitable triumph of the grave are put before us in the lamentations of the Countess Rousillon and others over the death of her husband and of his physician, Gerard de Narbon, of the latter of whom it is said, "He was skillful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality." The aspect of man's life from the point of view here taken is that of a being frail and corruptible, both in body and mind, the one being subject to disease and pain, and the other to error and passion, against which, in either case, there is no safeguard but Science, physical and moral. Helps and remedies are required to supply his deficiencies and correct his errors, and, in general, to aid his weakness. His wants are the source of innumerable desires, that urge him on to the incessant pursuit of some good that will improve his condition, —

"That something still that prompts the eternal sigh" —

yet desires are not always motives to the will, for often they are clearly impracticable, in which case they become mere wishes, which a well-regulated mind drops at once; they are fancies suggested by passing emotions; still, many things which are simply strange are taken to be impossible, and one of the best tests of genius and judgment is the ability to discern the mode of doing that on safe grounds which to the world at large seems utterly hopeless.

Wishes and desires, when out of our own reach; prompt entreaties and prayers to those who have the ability to aid us, and



out of the same need of help arise the arts of policy, through which men seek to gain the grace and favor of others, especially of superiors. With the great and powerful, again, desires are expressed as "wills" and "pleasures" which are equivalent to commands. Under the influence of memory, desires become regrets for the past, the lost and irretrievable, and penitence for misconduct is but an earnest wish that our conduct had been different. The hope and desire of immortality springs from our sense of the weakness and brevity of life, and men aspire to live in their deeds, even if they lift not their minds to a higher existence. In short, desires, hopes, and wishes are ever in the hearts and on the tongues of men, and so incessant is this flow of emotion that it fills ordinary discourse with familiar phrases and exclamations, like those with which this play abounds, as "*Would* for the king's sake he were living," "*I had* rather be in this choice than throw ames-ace for my life," "*I would* I had that corporal soundness now," etc., or the Countess's exclamation on the betrothment of Bertram and Lafeu's daughter:—

"Which better than the first *O dear heaven bless,*  
Or ere they meet, in me, *O Nature cease.*"

Act V. Sc. 3.

But the pursuit of wishes and desires, whether for the real or the apparent good, makes up the business of life, and the play, therefore, presents us with the world of affairs,—not dealing, however, with mercantile transactions or money-making,—but with the effecting of physical and moral results, that can be accomplished only by Science and Policy.

All business is the practical operation of some process for effecting an end; it is the application of a cause or rule of practice. Being done in successive steps, it is a *proceeding* or *process* which should constantly draw nearer to the end proposed and terminate in a *success*; in Shakespearian language, *success* denotes an issue, whether favorable or not, yet it is generally equivalent to *prosperity*, a word which etymologists say is derived from *pro spe*, *i. e.* according to hopes and wishes.

Though the term "business" is generally restricted to transactions that look to material profit and advantage, it really covers the whole conduct of life which must be governed by reason and judgment in order to attain success, which in the moral world is



the formation of a high and noble character, and is the most important task that man has to perform. This result is certain if sincerely and wisely pursued, whereas material success is the sport of Fortune.

There is always some one way of doing a thing better than any other, which better way will constitute a rule of practice, whether in the moral or the physical world. Hence the necessity of beginners asking advice and obtaining knowledge of the more experienced; good counsel always points to the wise way of doing a thing, and whatever its form, whether maxim, proverb, precept, parable, or what not, it is always *educational* and *instructive* and lays down a rule for guidance.

Good counsel proceeds from a knowledge of cause and consequence; and a book of precepts or rules of practice in the moral world is essentially the same as in the physical; it is made up of axioms for the application of causes in order to produce effects; as Bacon says, "Axioms when discovered, supply practice with its instruments." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 70.

In all affairs men need help, and to gain this is one of the ends of society. "For there are," says Bacon, treating of Civil Knowledge (De Aug. Book VIII. ch. i.), "three kinds of good, which men seek in Society: Comfort against solitude; *Assistance in Business*; and Protection against injuries."

Of these, "*Assistance in Business*" gives rise to the doctrine, which he styles "*Negotiation or Wisdom in Business*," under which falls the formation of methods and rules, which have regard to the advancement of one's fortune and are politic rather than moral.

This was a subject of which Bacon was preëminently a master, and on which he discourses always with depth and originality.

In *The Advancement* he says: "For the wisdom of Business wherein man's life is most conversant, there be no books of it, except some few scattered advertisements that have no proportion to the magnitude of the subject. . . . Of this Wisdom, it seemeth some of the ancient Romans in the saddest and wisest times were professors, for Cicero reporteth that it was then in use for senators of name and opinion for general wise men, as Coruncanius, Curius, Lælius, and many others, to walk at certain hours in the Place and to give audience to those that would use their advice, and that the particular citizens would resort unto them

and consult with them of the marriage of a daughter, or the employing of a son, or of a purchase or bargain, or of an accusation and *every other occasion incident to man's life*; so as there is a *wisdom of counsel and advice even in private cases* arising out of an universal insight into the affairs of the world."

The Wisdom of Business, then, is equivalent to that knowledge of human affairs derived from the wide experience that lies at the bottom of all wise counsel respecting the management of all the transactions of life.

Bacon then refers to the Proverbs (which he calls indifferently proverbs, parables, and aphorisms) of Solomon as an incomparable collection of rules and precepts, containing besides those of a theological character many civil precepts and cautions, and further adds, "that it was generally to be found in the wisdom of the more ancient times, that as *men found out any observation that they thought was good for life, they would gather it and express it in parable or aphorism or fable.*"

But besides the wisdom of imparting counsel, there is also wisdom for one's self, or the art of advancing one's fortunes. This includes many good and some evil arts, all of which, however, fall under the head of Policy.

From the foregoing passages cited from Bacon, it is evident that under the head of *Business* he comprehended the whole conduct of life, and that for its management rules of morality, of prudence, and policy were alike indispensable.

On this subject, also, he would have books written, and of these he himself left some noted specimens; for instance, this same Book VIII. of *De Augmentis*, with its precepts of policy and explanations of the Parables of Solomon; also his "Counsels and Essays, Civil and Moral," of which he remarks that "they come home to men's business and bosoms," being composed in fact of that very knowledge of life and affairs which he terms the *Wisdom of Business*; witness his Essay on *Cunning* or on *Negotiation*, or *Dissimulation* or *Wisdom for one's Self*, which, to all intents, are tables of rules and cautions and advice, both moral and politic, for guidance in the affairs of life.

But in all works of this nature, whatever their form, whether they be counsels for particular transactions or rules of morality or maxims of policy or axioms of science, there would be one idea common to all; they all (as has been said of good counsel) would



aim at giving instruction for action, or, in other words, they would be a collection of rules of practice; and a set of such rules for the accomplishment of some particular end would be a *Process* or method of proceeding.

It will be seen further on, that on the active side of Philosophy the chief step in Bacon's Process is the formation of a Table of Rules of Practice.

Although at the time *All's Well*, etc. was produced (which if it be the same play mentioned by Meres as *Love's Labour Won*, must have been previous to 1598) Shakespeare could not have been acquainted with any work of the kind suggested by Bacon (unless perchance it may have been Bacon's own book of *Counsels and Essays*, produced 1597), yet this comedy seems to have been constructed on "*the form*" or idea that underlies such works; for, setting aside the fact that the theme is the conduct of life, and that the whole dialogue is steeped in morality, the characters have their special projects and ends, requiring wisdom and counsel to carry to a successful issue; and a *process* or method of proceeding is involved in the action of the piece, of which the interest wholly lies in the conduct or moral progress of the two principal characters, a pair of young persons just starting in the world, one of whom, Helena, after curing the King by the application of a "rule of practice," still has before her the accomplishment of most difficult tasks, both physical and moral, which, however, by observing the precepts of a wise policy, she carries through to a full completion, while the other, Bertram, through the selection of bad ends and improper means, falls into disgrace and well-nigh irretrievable ruin.

The personages of the piece also advise and warn each other, as occasions arise, respecting conduct or associates; and to render the picture more natural, they fall into groups respectively of age and youth, of which the first consists of the Countess, Lafew, the King, the Duke, Widow Capulet, and Mariana, — all of whom are advanced in life, and whose business in the play is, for the most part, to give counsel and cautions to their younger companions, while, on the other hand, the youthful group contains the two French lords, Bertram and Diana, of whom the two latter are special objects of admonition. With the elder group may be placed Parolles, who is Bertram's trusted adviser, and who gives Helen and Diana many politic precepts, but all of them



corrupt ; while Helen — too young in years to be placed with the elderly characters, yet too wise to be classed with the younger ones — is her own counselor, being herself a model of self-government, and needing no guide but her own judgment for the attainment of her ends.

It seems, therefore, that this play adheres strictly in its construction to the Shakespearian method, its "form" being taken from a class of writings which contain counsels and precepts for the conduct of life, of which "books of proverbs" may be considered as a type ; and the matter of these writings being drawn from the practical side of life, the play presents a world of affairs, in which the action of the characters is avowedly the performance of tasks of great difficulty, for the successful completion of which are required, as means, wise rules of proceeding ; and these, and similar means and rules, when matured by experience and digested into systems, become branches of learning, or Morality and Policy ; which latter includes the Wisdom of Business, or that doctrine which appertains to "Assistance or Helps in the Affairs of Life," which, according to Bacon, is one of the three kinds of good which men seek in society. This doctrine of Wisdom of Business is copiously illustrated throughout the piece.

Men help each other from various motives, — duty, courtesy, love, or hire ; and so universal is the need of aid that the relations of society, all of which involve rights and duties, resolve themselves into the common one of master and servant. Human intercourse is an exchange of services on a basis of equivalence. Service should be rewarded according to its worth ; as Helen says, —

"Not helping, death's my fee ;  
But if I help, what do you promise me ?"

Praise, honor, thanks, gratitude, or more material rewards should be proportionate to the deed. Civil society depends upon ministrations and offices, of which the dignity and emoluments are supposed to be commensurate with the skill and integrity required to discharge them ; and in feudal times this need of mutual aid was made the basis of property in land and of rank in the State, the king dividing the territory of the realm into vast feuds, and bestowing them, with titles, on his ablest leaders as a stipend for their services ; and they, in turn, subdividing their domains into lesser feuds, which they distributed among their

immediate followers on like conditions, and so on down to the poor serf who was allowed his hut and patch of land on certain menial services to be rendered. The king and supreme lords held in ward the persons and estates of the minor heirs of their tenants, with the right of disposing of their hands in marriage; and it is on this feature of feudal law that the plot of the play is made to turn. The most honorable services were of a military nature, — for this system was not instituted for purposes of beneficence, but to uphold arbitrary power, — on which account a military spirit and sentiment pervaded feudal society, as it does also this play. Therefore in this society flourished in high vigor one of the strongest incentives to human action, a love of honor and distinction, to which men are spurred on by a sense of the brevity and perishable nature of their lives and the hope that by showing their merit they may win a name that shall live after them. But the highest merit is exhibited in doing the greatest good to mankind, yet the ordinary way of gaining glory has been by warlike exploits, which in the main prove most destructive to others. In the feudal State, a love of honor, especially of that which is won by feats of arms, inspired the youthful nobles, who lost no opportunity of distinguishing themselves by martial deeds, whether in the service of their own monarch or that of any other who would accept or allow their services. This indifference to which side they fought on is marked in the play by the French king, who had denied for reasons of state his assistance to the Florentines, and yet permitted his nobles to fight on either side at their pleasure. He says: —

“For our gentlemen, that mean to see  
The Tuscan service, *freely have they leave*  
*To stand on either part.*”

All employment but that of arms was considered unworthy of a gentleman; even the Church and Law were secondary, unless perhaps in their very highest dignitaries, and the most learned professors of what Bacon calls “the noble art of medicine” were looked upon as little better than mountebanks. The highest honors were awarded to physical strength and animal courage, united with skill in arms; and these honors were made hereditary on the supposition that the qualities that gained them were transmissible with the blood, and that the heir inherited the valor of the ancestor. Of course, this is a perpetuation of merit through



the body, and a building up of a nobility upon the inferior side of man's nature. The importance of the body, then, as a supreme factor in the creation of a nobility is apparent, a notion which the play indirectly satirizes by putting forward the imperfections of the body and its liability to disease and death, and thus showing that, after all, its safety and dependence are upon art, and especially the art of medicine which the military class so much affect to despise.

The transmission of titles and estates by blood at once created pride of birth, which scorned all alliance but with noble stock. This trait is embodied in Bertram, the conspicuous feature of whose character is a towering family pride, which leads him to spurn the proposal to marry Helen, a physician's daughter, though she was of incomparable worth both of mind and person, and backed by the favor of a powerful monarch. Nothing induces him to take her hand but the menaces of the king who, on his refusal, says, —

“Here, take her hand,  
Proud, scornful boy, unworthy this good gift ;  
That dost in vile misprision shackle up  
My love and her desert. . . .

Check thy contempt

. . . . .  
Or I will throw thee from my care forever  
Into the staggers and the careless lapse  
Of youth and ignorance ; both *my revenge and hate*  
*Loosing upon thee, in the name of justice*  
*Without all terms of pity. Speak, thine answer.”*

Act II. Sc. 3.

This is ideal tyranny ; for no abuse of power can be greater than the exercise on the part of the magistrate of “revenge and hate in the name of justice without all terms of pity.” It is probable that the poet paints the king's anger with such emphatic phrases in order to heighten the contrast between arbitrary political power resting on physical force and the beneficent effects of that power which springs from knowledge.

Another contrast of like nature is presented by what is afterwards said of Bertram's prowess in battle, which is thus spoken of : —

“The French Count has done most honourable service. He is reported to have taken their greatest commander, and that with his own hand he slew the Duke's brother.”



This circumstance, though mentioned only in a street gossip, has a significance beyond the mere fact in its being an instance of false honor, if judged by the standard set up in the play, which teaches, as will be seen, that the highest service, and, as such, entitled to the greatest reward, proceeds from the beneficence which appertains to knowledge applied to the endowment and help of man's life, and that, therefore, Helen, who had by art saved the life of the King, after he had been abandoned by his physicians as being past cure, was entitled to greater honor and a higher rank than the disdainful Bertram, whose only distinction, besides the empty one of birth, was derived from his ability to slay a fellow-creature in battle. The whole argument on this point, however, is summed up by the King, who, notwithstanding his arbitrary nature, has a clear mind, and skillfully draws the line of partition between the true and the false.

*Ber.* A poor physician's daughter my wife ! Disdain  
Rather corrupt me ever.

*King.* 'T is only title thou disdain'st in her, the which  
I can build up. Strange is it, that our bloods,  
Of colour, weight and heat, pour'd all together,  
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off  
In differences so mighty. If she be  
All that is virtuous (save what thou dislik'st,  
A poor physician's daughter) thou dislik'st  
Of virtue for the name : but do not so.  
From lowest place, when virtuous things proceed,  
The place is dignify'd by the doer's deed.  
Where great addition swells, and virtue none,  
It is a dropsied honour : good alone  
Is good without a name, vileness is so :  
The property by what it is should go, —  
Not by the title : she 's young, wise, fair,  
In these to nature she 's immediate heir,  
And these breed honour : that is honour's scorn  
Which challenges itself as honour 's born,  
And is not like the sire. Honours best thrive,  
When rather from our acts we them derive  
Than our fore-goers : the mere word 's a slave  
Debauch'd on every tomb ; on every grave  
A lying trophy ; and as oft is dumb  
Where dust and damn'd oblivion, is the tomb  
Of honour'd bones, indeed. What should be said ?  
If thou canst like this creature as a maid,  
I can create the rest : virtue and she  
Is her own dower ; honour and wealth from me."

Act II. Sc. 3.

Nobility by birth rests on the accidental ; it takes no note of the real differences of men, but often devolves titles and estates on fools and cowards, and "quite confounds distinction." We must therefore look to the reason, the faculty of knowledge for the superiority of one man over another. The rule is a simple one : he who renders the greatest help and service is entitled to the greatest reward ; and, consequently, knowledge, which is power, and goodness, which is the true exercise of such power, will give a preëminence to their possessor ; for the knowledge which is power is the knowledge of causes or the means of effecting ends, so that he who possesses this in the highest degree is able to confer the greatest benefits on his fellows, and will therefore be entitled to the highest distinction.

Knowledge and goodness are but more comprehensive terms for wisdom and virtue, of which, when applied to the business world, *skill* and *honesty* are special forms.

It should be noted that in Shakespeare *honesty* is often used in the broadest sense, and is equivalent to the Latin *honestum*, which comprises virtue and duty generally.

Help is the highest form of doing good, and the highest form of help is the imparting of wise counsel and knowledge, particularly when this is intended to amend the mind and form the character. But in order to trace the analogies which the play presents in the minds and manners of its characters to the Baconian Process, its moral basis must be stated with more particularity.

A real distinction among men must rest in the mind, the seat of knowledge, "by which man excelleth man in that wherein man excelleth beasts" (Adv.). Knowledge is either of men or things : out of the knowledge of things (which are physical causes) reason forms the axioms of science and the modes of effecting ends, which supply the physical wants of man, as is instanced in the medical skill of Helena ; and out of the knowledge of men, that is, of the good and evil in them ; the reason which, by its very nature is the source of principles and the arbiter of right and wrong (for what is reasonable is right and what unreasonable, wrong), frames rules for the government of conduct which, besides the precepts of morality, embrace the maxims of prudence and policy, and fill popular speech with innumerable proverbs that condense into pithy sayings the common wisdom of the world.



These rules cover or rather are identical with that Wisdom of Business which Bacon advises us to gather from the various occasions of life and store up in "proverb, parable, and fable." They necessarily form the substance of those counsels which are needed in all the affairs and at all periods of life, but which particularly enter into the education of youth for the purpose of moulding their minds to virtue and duty. But the knowledge here spoken of, though formulated into rules and codes, is not the dead abstract learning of books, but a living active knowledge implicit, as an operative principle, in the reason and will, and expressed, not in words, but in action. It is wisdom, the practical form of "the true difference" or characteristic of man, and in the individual, determines his moral and intellectual nature or what in modern speech is called his "character." And he who has the largest measure of this "true difference" has *ipso facto* the greatest distinction.

And as in the physical world the knowledge of "the true difference" or cause of any given nature furnishes (according to the Baconian system) an axiom or rule for superinducing that nature upon other natures, so in the moral world the knowledge of "the true difference" of man, stated in a rule, of which the practice is virtue and duty, furnishes the means of superinducing these qualities upon the minds and wills of others.

To determine "the true difference," then, with respect to men, is simply a question of morality and character, involving a sound discernment of good and evil.

For — although it is exceedingly trite and familiar, yet it is important to be considered in this play — the ends which men pursue are determined either by the blood or by the reason; and if the appetites and affections which furnish the springs of action be directed to the apparent good and its pursuit, it is because the judgment fails to draw true lines of division between the apparent and the real good, but confounds right and wrong, pleasure and duty, honor and profit, and the like, and approves of low and sensual ends that debase the character, as may be seen in the downward career of Bertram. This want of discrimination between the apparent and real good is the fundamental error of human life, or shall we say the primary and universal weakness and defect of human nature, of which all sin, vice, and immorality are but different forms which, when confirmed by habit, stifle the



conscience, blind the reason, and utterly confound good and evil ; whereas, if the reason bear sway and subject the desires to its dictates, they aim at real good, at works of beneficence, love, and self-sacrifice, through which a constant advance is made towards a higher life and a nobler character ; and this is seen in Helena.

The want of discrimination through which evil is loved — not because it is evil but because it is supposed a good — can only be remedied by purging the mind of false estimates, and bringing home to it a knowledge of their true natures through the degradation and shame they entail, and thus awakening penitence and a desire of amendment. This is the first step in the improvement of the character ; it argues an expansion of the mind and a clear perception of good and evil.

These familiar moral facts are noted only because they enter largely into the characterization and action of the piece.

Distinction, as the reward of merit, has its origin in the moral sentiments of approval and disapproval that accompany judgments on actions. These sentiments naturally pass over from the actions to the agent, — in the case of right action exciting esteem and a disposition to reward the agent with commendation and honor, while, in the contrary case, indignation is felt and a desire to punish the wrong-doer, and visit him with scorn and disgrace. But men are eager to win praise and shun shame, and the moral sentiments, therefore, become powerful springs of action towards a correct life and the practice of rectitude.

The desire of esteem easily runs into excess, and becomes self-esteem or pride in one's own excellence ; and, indeed, superiority of any kind is apt to beget the same vice of character. We see in Bertram that pride of birth leads him to consider rank superior to any moral or intellectual worth. The highest excellence is the least self-conscious ; the humility of Helena, in view of her energy and ability, is one of the greatest charms of her character.

In this play, which is made up of moral judgments, the moral sentiments are the atmosphere in which the characters live and have their being. The interest, it will be perceived, is derived not from the play of passion, but from the mode in which the persons exercise their judgments with respect to "the true difference" in individuals, or, in other words, their characters.

Notwithstanding Helen's devoted love for Bertram (which, however, is very quiet and briefly expressed), the level of emotion throughout the piece scarce ever rises higher than that of admiration and praise for virtue, and indignation and scorn for vice.

It is a familiar fact that while the moral sentiments, awakened by actions, naturally, though often unjustly, affect our minds towards the agents, our partialities and dislikes for the agents immensely influence our judgments on their actions. In estimating others, therefore, no less than in directing our own conduct, there is absolute need of guarding against error, and to this end the reason frames a *rule to follow*, or a standard of character to prevent misjudgment through feeling.

And here again, for this rule, recourse must be had to a knowledge of "the true difference" in man, or, what is the same thing, *the idea of intellectual and moral excellence*, which, in the business world presented in this play, is the common standard of "skill and honesty," the qualities of the highest use and value in practical life. In this standard, perfection can never be arrived at, for on the intellectual side knowledge is always imperfect, and on the moral side there always lurks in the soul some secret evil too subtle for reason to warn against by rule or definition; yet knowledge is ever progressive; some advance may always be made in improving the standard and refining the character.

In this practical world, then, only that degree of excellence is demanded which is within the reasonable compass of man's faculties to attain, as is the case with respect to the professional merit of Gerard de Narbon, of whom it is said that "his *skill* was almost as great as *his honesty*"; had it stretched so far, would have made nature immortal and death should have play for lack of work" (Act I. Sc. 1), or, as in military life is the case with Bertram's father, whose high honor and skillful soldiership are described by the king as a type of character that may be used as a model for imitation: —

"Such a man  
Might be a copy to these younger times  
Which, follow'd well, would demonstrate them now  
But goes backward."

Act I. Sc. 2.



Helen, however, if we take Lafeu's enthusiastic description of her, touches the ideal at all points :—

“ Whose beauty did astonish the survey  
Of richest eyes ; whose words all ears took captive ;  
Whose *dear perfection* hearts that scorn'd to serve  
Humbly call'd mistress.”

Act V. Sc. 3.

The only ideal that can be accepted without question by the practical man is the one of the greatest Power and Goodness offered by religion ; this receives the greatest honor and worship ; to serve this power is to obey its mandates, which the rebellious nature of man is constantly violating, — a disobedience for which pardon can be obtained only by sincere penitence. These theological tenets, with others of a like kind, referring to man's weak and corrupt nature, run like an undercurrent in the dialogue, and now and then glance lightly on the surface, yet with emphasis enough to remind us that behind morality stands religion as the guide of life, and that this is recognized by the principal persons of the piece as the ultimate arbiter of conduct and the awarder of rewards and punishments. Still in the world of affairs which, as here represented, is ruled by the moral sentiments, honor and shame, it is to these we must look for the means of practically working a change in the minds of the corrupt and profligate. The fear of shame, of ignominy, of the contempt of the world, of the loss of name and reputation, are the motives which hold both men and women in the right path, and recall them when they have strayed. By these principles Helen reclaims Bertram.

Since “ the true difference ” of men lies in their characters, and these are compounded of virtues and vices, it frequently becomes difficult to strike an accurate balance between the good and evil in them. One of the clear-headed personages of the piece remarks :—

“ Our life is a web of mingled yarn, the good and ill together ; our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not, and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues.” Act IV. Sc. 3.

This is a practical view and a real one, inasmuch as human character is the result of native disposition acted on by education (and environment, which is the most powerful educational influence), the first furnishing the soil with its inherent tendencies to



the growth of good or evil, and the latter encouraging or repressing either the one or the other, to the improvement or deterioration of the character. This difference between the qualities that are native to the blood and those implanted by cultivation in the soul is broadly marked in the piece, — a line of distinction being drawn throughout between the body and the soul for artistic effect. Thus, the Countess in giving precepts and “her holy wishes” to Bertram, says: —

“Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father  
*In manners as in shape! thy blood and virtue*  
*Contend for empire in thee! And thy goodness*  
 Share with *thy birth-right!* Love all, trust a few,” etc.

Act I. Sc. 1.

So the King says to Bertram: —

“Youth, thou bearest *thy father's face*.  
 Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,  
 Hath well compos'd thee. *Thy father's moral parts*  
 May'st thou *inherit too.*”

Act I. Sc. 2.

Hence the necessity of counsels and instructions — in one word, education — to teach the real difference of vice and virtue and fix in the will the practice of good habits and a pure morality. The mind being purged of false estimates, discerns the right and true, however obscured; and what is equally important, it acquires a knowledge of evil, which is indispensable, for by such knowledge alone can it guard itself against evil arts and reclaim others from vice. “Men of corrupt understandings,” says Bacon, “that have lost all sound discerning of good and evil, come possessed with this prejudicate opinion, that they think all honesty and goodness proceedeth out of a simplicity of manners and a kind of want of experience and unacquaintance with the affairs of the world. Therefore except they may perceive those things which are in their hearts, that is to say, their own corrupt principles and the deepest reaches of their cunning and rottenness, to be thoroughly sounded and known to him that goes about to persuade with them, they make but a play of the words of wisdom” (*Meditationes Sacræ*).

It should be remarked that all counsels and instructions which are derived from experience and point out a course to be pursued for the accomplishment of a result are the application of axioms and rules for the effecting of an end. They are precisely analo-

gous with the use of an axiom in physical science for operating an effect: therefore all the advice, counsels, cautions, and commands that are encountered in the play go to support its character of a parable illustrating Operative Philosophy.

In their eagerness to obtain success men thrust aside morality, which forbids dissimulation, and, instead, resort to "practice" and policy, which, though not necessarily corrupt, have always a tendency to knavery and fraud; still, in the world of business there seems to be a middle ground held alike by morality and policy, where honesty may shelter itself against injustice by lawful deception, but not so, however, as to violate morality in any essential particular. In these cases of conscience and of necessity, as they are called, there is a special need of a clear distinction between what is intrinsically good or bad and that which is only formally so, in order that the line of separation may be traced between what is allowable and what not. In this dubious region, the criterion seems to be the motive, and to know this requires an ability to see beneath all the false constructions of words and actions the purpose which prompts them and gives them their moral value. Along this perilous path where acts may be right in principle though wrong in circumstance, Helen walks by reason of her pure heart and clear judgment without stain or injury.

The choice of ends, therefore — for ends are motives and purposes — is the chief exponent of character, since it determines whether a man is governed by the reason or by the blood; and Bacon, speaking of the amendment of evil manners and of the means of reducing the mind to order, lays down as the remedy, which of all others is the most compendious and summary, "the electing and proposing on to a man's self good and virtuous ends of his life and actions, such as may in a reasonable sort be within his compass to attain."

After the formation of his own character, the best use of knowledge by its possessor is the benefit of his fellow-men, especially the amendment and reformation of those who have fallen into vicious courses. Such a task is a work of genuine love; and as it is the greatest help, so is it entitled to the highest love and praise. Of this nature is the task, which, in addition to the one formally assigned to her, Helen undertakes with regard to Bertram.



This feature of the play is in accordance with that dictum of Bacon's — urged by him with so much fervor and eloquence — that knowledge is perverted from its true end when not applied to the use and benefit of man's estate.

On the other hand, nothing will corrupt more perniciously the manners of youth just entering on life than the companionship and example of an experienced man of the world, of base nature and dishonest life, who, notwithstanding his vices, has some showy parts and is believed by his companions to be quite complete in the ways of the world, and, in fact, in all that is worth knowing. Such a man is apt to be admired by fresh and ingenuous youth and adopted as a model; but what is still worse, he so blends vice with apparent merit that he confounds moral differences in the minds of the inexperienced, who are led to think that profligacy is not merely venial, but meritorious, since one so admirable upholds it both by opinion and practice. Of this class is "the counterfeit module," Parolles.

The essence of the Wisdom of Business lies in the knowledge of men, through which we guard against knaves and impostors, and select proper instruments for the prosecution of designs—for "all matters are as dead images and the life of the execution of affairs rests in the choice of persons" (Essay on Counsel). And, further, as honesty and skill represent "the true difference" in the business world, an extensive knowledge of individuals and all their variety of character, both mental and moral, is indispensable to the choice. As the natural philosopher, through his knowledge of their essential natures, selects certain bodies for the production of certain effects, so the man of affairs, through his knowledge of men's characters, selects fit agents for effecting his ends. But in a world where distinctions are so difficult to draw between the true and the false, they are especially hard with respect to human character, compounded as it is of virtues and vices so closely and subtly intertwined that they render the heart a mystery, even to such an extent that men often are proverbially and profoundly ignorant of their own motives and unacquainted with the essential nature of their own speech and action.

"Yet that this knowledge of man is possible," says Bacon, "Solomon is our authority, who saith, Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out." And in his Wisdom of Business, in that branch of it



that treats of the pursuit of fortune, he lays down as his first precept that we obtain, so far as we can, that window which Momus required, who, seeing in the frame of man's heart such angles and recesses, found fault that there was not a window to look into its mysterious and tortuous windings. This window we shall obtain by carefully procuring information of the particular persons with whom we have to deal, etc. De Aug. Book VIII. ch. ii.

To this window the old lord, Lafeu, alludes, when having put Parolles' courage to the test by the grossest indignities and found him craven, he says: "Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy trial; which if — Lord have mercy upon thee for a hen! So, my *good window of lattice*, fare thee well; *thy casement I need not open, I look through thee.*" Act II. Sc. 3.

"The surest key," according to Bacon, "to unlock the minds of men is by searching and thoroughly understanding either their dispositions and natures or their intentions and ends (*ingeniis et naturis ipsorum vel finibus et intentionibus*). De Aug. Book VIII. ch. ii.

Natures and ends can hardly be learned except through words and actions; so that, besides the relations of others, words and actions are the main sources of a knowledge of character.

Words are the directest mode; they are the vehicle of knowledge; and the very aim and object of language is to bring together men's minds and enable them to understand each other's intents and meanings. Without this mutual understanding, society could not exist. Speech is the deliverance and expression of the soul, and gives life to promises and makes veracity the chief constituent of honesty and honor. By language men look through the same moral medium and judge by a common standard. But in proportion to its use is the extent of its abuse; and great as it is as a help, it is equally great as an impediment. Even when a man purports to lay bare his mind by confessing and discovering his secret intent, he is liable to be misunderstood through the imperfection of speech itself; but when to this source of error is superadded intentional deceit, which hides the heart behind a mask of ambiguous words and actions, the discovery of his real self is like that of a perplexing riddle, of which, nevertheless, it is indispensable to discover the meaning in order to arrive at a

knowledge of the essential nature or "the true difference" of the man.

Another source of the knowledge of particular men is the information derived from others; this is largely exemplified both in that common reputation, which flies about concerning individuals, originating one can scarce tell where, and to be received with the greatest distrust; and that more special and detailed knowledge which emanates from friends and followers, and claims accuracy on the ground of personal experience. But in all cases, information must be weighed by the veracity and intelligence, that is, the character of the speaker. The play affords a notable instance in the mendacious and slanderous reports given by Parolles as to the honesty and skill of his fellow-officers.

In order to pierce the veil of craft and dissimulation in which men wrap themselves, recourse must often be had to "practice" and the arts of policy, by which the minds of men are cunningly wrought upon, and the secrets of their hearts discovered.

In his essay on this subject of "Negotiation" Bacon says: "All practice is to discover or to work. Men discover themselves in trust, in passion, at unawares, or of necessity, when they would have somewhat done, and cannot find an apt pretext. If you would work any man (*si quem ad nutum fingere cupias, ut inde efficias aliquid*) you must either know his nature and fashions, and so lead him, or his ends, and so persuade him, or his weakness and disadvantages, and so awe him, or those that have interest in him, and so govern him."

All these different rules of practice, or modes of bending others to our purposes, are exemplified in the piece, and at times two or more of them are combined in the same example.

The Countess works upon Helen's love for Bertram, and causes her to confess her secret passion; Lafeu works upon the cowardice and "weakness" of Parolles, and so "awes" him and makes manifest his false pretensions; the French lords also play upon his fears, and cause him to reveal his treachery to Bertram; Helen works upon the King by exciting his hopes of recovery, and makes him an instrument for effecting her ends; she also enlists "the interest" of Widow Capulet, and so "governs" Diana as an agent in her scheme to win Bertram; Diana works upon Bertram, and obtains his ancestral ring; Parolles works upon



Bertram's inclinations and love of honor to instigate him to fly to Florence; Helen, moreover, discovers herself "at unawares" when she is overheard by the Steward confessing her love. Other instances might be added; but if we examine the texture of the dialogue, it will be found throughout to have reference to means and measures, to counsels, instructions, and commands towards the effecting of some end.

To read, then, the riddle of the human heart, it is necessary to reach the motive or end, for this reveals the essential nature of words and actions, the same act being either good or bad according to the intent of the agent; as Helen says with respect to the stratagem to be practiced upon Bertram:—

"Which if it speed,  
Is *wicked meaning in a lawful deed,*  
And *lawful meaning in a lawful act,*  
Where *both not sin and yet a sinful fact.*"

No reliance, therefore, can be placed upon words and actions as expressions of the soul, until we are assured that we understand the motive that constitutes their "true difference."

The foregoing views of life and man are concrete in the persons and action of the piece, which is so constructed that the never-ending struggle in the nature of man between the blood and the reason is directly presented. Out of this grows the consideration of rules of conduct, and the action of the piece raises questions that reach the primary principles of morality and policy. This necessarily brings into view character, which becomes the subject on which the personages of the piece are called upon to exercise their judgments, and for this purpose they adopt as a standard the greatest honesty and knowledge; that is, the ablest helper or wisest counselor. This is he who knows the true difference or real nature of things, who discerns the essence of good and evil under all circumstances, who judges correctly in the choice of ends and means, and who, therefore, gains the highest distinction for character. The most effectual helper is the counselor who incorporates into his character and gives practical life and operation to the rules of morality and policy, and who by teaching others guides them in the true course or restrains them from the false one. The wise man, therefore, who is both moral and politic, who both knows and acts, stands at the centre of this view of practical life.



Helen, a physician's daughter, has been reared in the household of a great feudal noble, and has acquired, in addition to the science incidentally received from her wise father, the accomplishments of a high-born lady ; so that, although a dependant in station and clearly apprehending the immense disparity of rank between herself and patrons, she feels that, on personal grounds, she is essentially their equal. The King, struck with admiration of her beauty and courage, makes the following judgment of her : —

“ All that life can rate  
Worth name of life in thee hath estimate,  
Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, virtue, all  
That happiness and prime can happy call.”

The Countess, her foster-mother, from a familiar and domestic experience, forms a more practical estimate. She says : “ I have those hopes of her good that her education promises ; her *dispositions* she *inherits*, which makes *fair gifts fairer* ; for when an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, these commendations go with pity ; they are virtues and traitors too ; in her they are better for their simpleness ; *she derives her honesty and achieves her goodness.*”

Thus blood and education unite to exalt her character ; her native honesty of soul has been strengthened and enriched with fair gifts by education.

Judged, however, by her own words and actions, she possesses sensibility, judgment, and fortitude ; exhibiting warm feeling, a clear intellect, and a strong will, a combination that endows her with an efficiency undaunted by any difficulty, and a generosity capable of any sacrifice.

Having been reared under the same roof with the young Count Bertram, she has loved him from her childhood, and her affection has become the one strong, predominant passion of her nature. It is a type of a powerful, controlling desire which furnishes a persistent motive to the will for any effort that promises reasonable hope of success. Her clear intellect sees all things in the simple light of the sense, uninfluenced by imagination or feeling, and admits no intrusion of hope or fear, that is not approved by reason. She weighs every circumstance for what it is really worth, and is unbiased by artificial distinctions. This implies a knowledge of things as they are, and a mind capable of discovering

the "true differences" or essential natures of things. Her plans, therefore (when she makes any), are almost sure of success, since they are based upon an accurate judgment in the selection of means, times, and persons.

Helen's temperament gives a good example of Bacon's doctrine on the delusiveness of hope. Bacon ever inveighs against inordinate hope; he calls it "a madness," "a waking dream," and to the First Edition of his Counsels and Essays, 1597 (about the date of this play in its first form, supposing it to be the same as *Love's Labour Won*, mentioned by Meres, 1598), there were appended certain *Religionis Meditationes*, one of which was a tract on "Earthly Hope," with the motto, "Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desires," and in this he says: "The sense, which takes everything *simply as it is* makes a better mental condition and estate than those imaginations and wanderings of the mind." And this freedom from delusion he also makes a rule of his philosophy, for he says, "it all depends on *keeping the eye steadily fixed upon the facts of nature and on receiving their images simply as they are.*"

And he further says: "All hope is to be employed upon the life to come; but here on earth, by *how much purer is the sense of things present* without infection or tincture of imagination, by so much wiser and better is the soul."

And so Helen, although being in love with Bertram she naturally indulges her "idolatrous fancy" in dwelling upon his image and in drawing

"His archèd brow, his hawking eye, his curls  
In her heart's table," —

yet sees with perfect distinctness her relations to Bertram, and that they preclude the hope of marrying him. She thus describes her passion and its hopelessness: —

"It were all one  
That I should love some bright particular star  
And think to wed it, he is so above me :  
In his bright radiance and collateral light  
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere."

Although cherishing no hope — for her reason can point to no ground for any — she, on the other hand, embraces no rash despair. Notwithstanding the immense social gulf between her and

Bertram, there is nothing but that gulf between them, and by merit it may be over-passed. In the confession of her love, which is wrung from her by the Countess, there is an entire freedom from self-delusion, and at the same time it manifests an inward assurance that the case is not desperate, if an opportunity should offer.

"I confess  
Here on my knees before high heaven and you  
I love your son.

I follow him not  
By any token of presumptuous suit,  
*Nor would I have him, till I do deserve him,*  
*Yet never know how that desert should be.*  
*I know I love in vain, strive against hope," etc.*

[It may be observed that the passage from which these verses are taken is a fine instance of Shakespeare's power of adapting rhythm to sentiment. It is like a spontaneous utterance stamped with the sincerity of the speaker's mind, the sound answering to the sense and the melody of the verse, and its pauses rising and falling in exact unison with the fluctuating currents of feeling of the speaker.]

But the opportunity offers : she hears the conversation between Lafew and the Countess, from which she learns the nature of the King's malady, and that the "congregated college" of "most learned doctors" have pronounced it incurable ; and remembering that among the remedies left her by her father there was one especially suited to the King's case, she at once forms the bold project of offering her services to the King for his cure, on the condition that if she fail her life is forfeit, but if she succeeds the King shall bestow upon her the hand in marriage of any one of his wards she may select. She thus reasons with herself : —

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie  
Which we ascribe to Heaven : *the fated sky*  
*Gives us free scope* : only doth backward pull  
Our slow designs when *we ourselves are dull.*

And with this encouraging thought, she is aware that in spite of the barriers of hereditary rank, an intrinsic worth can equalize outward differences, and that if she strives, she may by merit show herself worthy of Bertram.



“ *Whoever strove*

*To shew her merit that did miss her love ?*

*The mightiest space in Fortune nature brings*

*To join like likes and kiss like native things.”*

Nor ought she to be deterred by the apparent impossibility of the task, for —

*Impossible seem strange attempts to those*

*Who weigh their pains in sense.*

Attempts that are only *strange* and unusual seem actually *impossible* to those who weigh only the difficulties, and do not see the means of overcoming them. And knowing that she holds the means of restoring the king to health, and of possibly obtaining Bertram's hand for her service, she does not hesitate to form the project, and to put it into immediate execution. She says : —

“The king's disease — my project may deceive me

But my intents are fix'd and will not leave me.”

Act I. Sc. 1.

This likewise is in accordance with Bacon's doctrines, for notwithstanding his soberness of judgment, that repelled all hope as a delusion, it did not forbid his weighing the possibilities of things, and in his Tables of Discovery he always assigns a place to a “Chart of *Apparent Impossibilities* or Things to be wished for” (*Humane Optativæ*). “For to form judicious wishes is as much a part of knowledge as to ask judicious questions” (Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 49).

Of course, a judicious wish is one warranted by a just estimate of the probabilities.

And so with Helen's plan ; it is to her mind perfectly feasible. She yields unduly to neither hope nor fear, but looking at things just as they appear to the sense clearly sees her way to a fortunate issue. And in this, again, she shows a wisdom akin to that advocated by Bacon in another passage of his Essay on Earthly Hope, which runs in these words : “It is fit to forecast and presuppose upon sound and sober conjecture good things as well as evil, . . . only this must be the work of the understanding and judgment with a just inclination of the feeling.” This describes Helen's forecasting of the result.

But though Helen is depicted as indulging in no hope of success, but such a rational one as a just estimate of the probabilities

will warrant, she has yet another trait which is a frequent accompaniment of great strength of mind, that is, a confidence in one's ability, which in the case of great politicians and leaders generally takes the form of a superstitious belief in one's destiny, or star. Of a feeling akin to this Helen's character partakes, although in her such premonition of success is lightly touched, and is drawn in keeping with her feminine modesty and delicacy, as a *quasi* religious faith, growing out of the veneration in which she holds her father's memory. She says:—

“There's something hints  
More than my father's skill (which was the greatest  
Of his profession) that his good receipt  
Shall, for my legacy, be sanctified  
By the luckiest stars in heaven.”

Act I. Sc. 3.

And this doctrine, also, Bacon teaches as a part of the Wisdom of Business. He sets forth that these confidences in men who do not attribute their successes to fortune “are ever unhallowed and unblessed, and, therefore, those that are great politiques indeed ever ascribed their successes to *their felicity*, and not to their *skill or virtue*.”

This feeling is especially apparent in Helen, when she urges upon the King a trial of her remedy.

“He that of greatest works is finisher  
Oft does them by the weakest minister:  
So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown,  
When judges have been babes: great floods have flown  
From simple sources; and great seas have dry'd.  
When miracles have by the greatest been deny'd  
Oft expectation fails, and most oft there  
Where most it promises; and oft it hits  
Where hope is coldest, and despair most sits.

. . . . .  
It is not so with him that all things knows  
As 't is with us, that square our guess by shows.  
But most it is presumption in us, when  
The help of heaven we count the act of men.  
Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent;  
Of heaven, not me, make an experiment,” etc.

Act II. Sc. 1.

The issue justifies her judgment; she is successful and wins Bertram's hand as a reward for her service to the King; but

Bertram refuses to treat her as a wife, flies from home, and takes service with the Duke of Florence; he, moreover, sends her a letter, in which, in order to quench in her all hope, he assigns certain apparently impossible conditions for her to perform, before he will receive her as a wife, and declares that "until he has no wife he has nothing in France."

This nullifies all her efforts; there is no longer a ground for effecting success. Yet in the face of this dreadful trial, she retains her self-government, and beyond one or two ejaculations, as "It is a dreadful sentence, "'T is bitter," she bears her grief in silence. She is one who wastes no energy in outcries against Fortune; yet her situation is most humiliating to her pride, being that of a rejected bride; but her generosity and nobleness of nature protect, nay, exalt her. Her thoughts are for Bertram only: she looks upon herself as the cause of his being self-exiled, and his life exposed in battle; and at once resolves to sacrifice all her own wishes to his welfare by retiring to a religious house and leaving him at liberty to return to France. She thus soliloquizes:—

"I will be gone;  
My being here it is that holds thee hence.  
Shall I stay here to do 't? No, no, although  
The air of paradise did fan the house,  
And angels offic'd all: I will be gone,  
That pitiful rumour may report my flight,  
To console thine ear. Come, night! end, day!  
For, with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away."

Act III. Sc. 2.

This step on her part is brought to his knowledge, and it strongly works upon his feelings. One of his companions, speaking of his mother's letter containing this news, says:—

"There's something in it stings his nature, for on the reading it he *changed almost into another man.*"

This penitence, thus wrought by her nobleness of conduct, lays a foundation for a permanent change of his sentiments towards her.

Helen's skill and efficiency are not displayed so much in inventing deep and cunning schemes as in the judgment and promptitude with which she seizes upon passing events and converts them into the means of attaining her ends. This trait, also, answers to a doctrine of Bacon, who says: "It has been commonly



seen that those who have attributed most to fortune *and held themselves alert and vigilant to use occasions as they present themselves*, have enjoyed great prosperity, whereas deep schemers, who have trusted to have all things cared for and considered, have been unfortunate." *De mensura rerum*.

And Helen, after having temporarily foregone her design, yet falling in with the Widow Capulet and her daughter and learning the relations they hold to Bertram, at once sees her opportunity, devises her plan, and converts these persons into instruments of its execution. She engages not only their zeal, but their affections, in her service.

Helen's mind is a type of an intellect uninfected by imagination or feeling; it justly discriminates between the true and the false, and, always looking at the veritable natures of things, it judges of them by their inward intent and meaning, which alone give them their moral value; and the perception of this truth, together with the consciousness of her own high and pure purposes, enables her to undergo the indignity and degradation which she passes through, and, in fact, dignifies conduct which the conventional world would consider deplorably wanting in due pride and self-respect. She shows a like discrimination in judging of Bertram, perceiving that although evil companions and youthful passions had developed the vices of his character, there was behind them a true nobility deserving of her love. It is more for his sake than for her own that she makes the most painful sacrifices. This intrinsic purity preserves our respect under all circumstances, and in fact it explains why the poet was willing to dramatize a subject so repulsive, for he uses it as the means of developing an exquisite purity of soul that could not be made apparent under circumstances less compromising.

The cure of the King had been simply the application of a rule of practice to produce a prescribed result; it depends upon physical causes alone, but the performance of the task assigned her by Bertram can only be carried out by stratagem, for, unless Bertram is deceived, it can never be accomplished. She is, therefore, compelled to resort to policy and practice; and this is justified by her and her coadjutors on the ground that

"It is no sin

To cozen him that would unjustly win."

Deceit and fraud used by Bertram to work ends that are base are justly met and counter-checked by craft and dissimulation.

But even after succeeding, she must have failed to convince Bertram and others of the facts as they had actually occurred, except for her astuteness in perceiving what proofs were necessary and in what way they must be presented to produce the requisite impression. This point she effects by spreading circumstantial reports of her own death, by which she causes the immediate return of Bertram to Rousillon, — a step which both brings him within the power of the King and lays a ground for the charge of Diana, whom he had promised to marry after his wife's death ; but the chief proof that was to identify her own action in the affair was the ring given her by the king, which she puts upon Bertram's finger to the express end

“That what in time proceeds  
May token to the future their past deeds.”

The details need not be given here ; but with the aid of Diana, whom she instructs in her part and makes ready with ambiguous statements, she works up the matter into a perplexing riddle, which seems to be entirely without a clue, until, upon Diana's saying, —

“So there 's my riddle, one that 's dead is quick,  
And now behold the meaning,” —

Helen, who is supposed dead, enters, and it is at once apparent that she and Diana are in collusion, and that it is she and not Diana who has been the chief actor in the plot, and that she has performed the task which had been imposed upon her.

This incident of the ring, which Helen gives Bertram, and which is so absolutely necessary as a proof to discriminate between Helen and Diana, is not in the original story, nor do we find there the riddle-like *dénouement* of the piece ; but these intricately woven incidents may be considered as representing, in a parable-play, the secret and tortuous ways of Nature which Bacon invented his process or body of rules to discover, and which, on that account, he called “the clue of the labyrinth” (*filum labyrinthi*). In that case, Helen, who solved the riddle, would represent science, the aim of which is to draw true lines of partition between things, according to their true differences or essential natures. The ability to make true distinctions, and to see and know things actually as they are in their veritable natures, is the conspicuous trait of Helen's mind.



It will be noted that the whole puzzle grows out of Bertram's having mistaken Helen for Diana, — a palpable proof of his inability to perceive real differences, and typical of his mind, which in its prominent traits is the direct opposite of Helen's.

He is a young noble, whose native good qualities have been perverted by a false education and evil companions. His breeding as a feudal lord has infected him with an overweening pride of birth, which clouds his judgment both of himself and others. He is totally ignorant of the world, has never been at court, and has lived a life so secluded that he never has even heard of what Lafeu calls "the notorious" illness of the King. But in his own domain he is supreme. His every wish is gratified, and he is, therefore, without discipline and self-government. His blood, of which he is so proud, is hot and unbridled, and generates desires that lead to conduct that would be base in the basest hind.

Having been summoned to court by the King, he meets there a number of young lords, who are about to start for Florence to take service with the Duke. Bertram, with the love of adventure and of honor natural to youth, wishes to take part with them, but the King forbids him. This check galls him, and excites a rebellious spirit in his ill-governed temper; he at once shows his discontent, —

"I am commanded here and kept a coil with

'Too young' and 'the next year' and 't'is too early,' " etc., —

and complains that he has to wait, —

"Creaking his shoes on the plain masonry

Till honour is bought up and no sword worn

But one to dance with, — "

and he adds, "By Heaven, I'll steal away."

While in this mood and harboring this intent, he is forced by the arbitrary power of the King into a marriage with one whom he regards as vastly his inferior. He knows Helen as a dependant, not to say a servant, of his mother, and with the pride of a feudal lord and the arrogance of youth, he spurns the alliance. But the menaces of the king compel him to accede, and this strengthens his intention of flight. "In war," he says, "there is no strife to the dark house and detested wife." He flies to Florence, where he receives a high military rank, in which his inherited



courage and soldiership (for his father is described as a model soldier, who might be taken for "a copy to the younger times") enable him to win great distinction.

But he is a jumble of virtues and defects, moral and mental. Brave and successful as a soldier, he is lamentably deficient in judgment of men and things. Blinded by pride and the prejudices of his class, he sees nothing as it actually is. His enormous overestimate of his own worth on account of his birth and title as compared with Helen reveals the weakness of his judgment and his inability to see true differences. In like manner his admiration of Parolles is another gross instance of his want of discrimination. His faults and vices are due in a large measure to his inexperience and to his not being "settled from the boiling heat of his affections nor attempered with time and experience;" and on that account we may the more easily overlook them and admit his mother's plea, who lays them to

"Natural rebellion, done in the blaze of youth,  
When oil and fire too strong for reason's force  
O'erbears it and burns on."

Bertram may be also in part excused by reason of his being deceived in the character of Parolles, who exercises a pernicious influence over him. Bertram believes him to be a valiant and skillful soldier, and a large part of the play is taken up with a plot to expose to him this gross error of his judgment.

The old courtier, Lafeu, warns him against Parolles as an untrustworthy companion. He says: "Trust him not in matters of heavy consequence; I have kept of them tame and *know their natures.*"

One of his fellow officers tells him: "It was fit *you knew him*, lest reposing too far in his virtue (which he hath not) he might *at some great and trusty business in a main danger fail you.*"

Nothing but Parolles' shameless confession and betrayal of his comrades opens Bertram's eyes to his true character, and enables him "*to take a true measure of his own judgment*, wherein he so curiously had set this counterfeit."

But not only in his judgment of others but also of his own conduct does Bertram fail of drawing true distinctions. He is dishonorable in the highest degree towards Diana Capulet, particularly in the base falsehood with which he attempts to asperse

her character in order to shield himself from the consequences of his broken promise. Nothing can excuse his disgraceful conduct, but it may be said in extenuation that it is the result of his education, for which he is not responsible. A noble of high birth and filled from childhood with an inflated sense of his own superiority, he feels himself as much privileged in the moral, as in the social, world, and does not consider himself under the same necessity of keeping his obligations to one of humble birth (particularly in a love-intrigue) as he would with one of his own class. He conceives that he has a right to protect his rank at all hazards from claims that would debase it in the eyes of his high-born friends. After Diana has made charge that he promised her marriage as the price of her honor, he defends himself by pleading his superior station ; he says to the King : —

“ Let your highness  
Lay a more *noble thought upon my honour*  
Than for to think that *I would sink it here.*”

His pride (with which he supposes the King will sympathize) revolts at “ sinking ” his honor by a marriage with one of inferior birth, but he deems it no “ sinking ” of his honor to make a false promise in order to betray a virtuous gentlewoman. Such is his confusion of moral differences : he confounds honor of station with honor of sentiment and conduct.

But his confusion of thought is habitual ; he is utterly without method or form. After deciding to depart from Florence, he takes leave of the Duke upon casually meeting him in the street ; and having heard of the death of his wife, he gives to it no more attention than he would to any ordinary incident. He says : “ I have to-night despatched sixteen businesses a month’s length a piece, by an abstract of success : I have congée’d with the Duke ; done my adieu with his nearest ; buried a wife ; mourn’d for her ; writ to my lady mother I am returning ; entertain’d my convoy, and between these main parcels of despatch, effected many nicer deeds,” etc., — a medley of affairs, which, however incongruous, he jumbles together and regards one of as much weight as another.

A character like Bertram’s, of which the predominant trait is pride, is peculiarly amenable to opinion, for his happiness depends upon the gratification of this feeling through the high estimate awarded him by others. Disgrace and contempt from his equals



in rank are the greatest miseries that can be inflicted upon him ; and on this trait of his character Helen works, — following therein some advice of Bacon's, who in his directions for the amendment of the mind speaks of "setting affection against affection," and of "using the aid of one to master another, like hunters and fowlers, who use to hunt beast with beast and catch bird with bird, upon which foundation is erected that excellent use in civil government of reward and punishment . . . using those predominant affections of hope and fear to suppress and bridle all the rest." De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.

And in a letter written by Bacon to Sir Henry Savill he treats of several methods of altering the mind, of which one is, "When one affection is healed and corrected by another, as when cowardice is remedied by shame and dishonour, or sluggishness or backwardness by indignation and emulation. *And so of the like.*"

This is the plan which Helen adopts for the reformation of Bertram. She arouses his pride to take arms against the deep disgrace he has incurred, and remove it by changing his course.

Like the Countess, Lafeu, and all of Bertram's friends, Helen believes him to be led astray and depraved by his corrupt parasite, Parolles. She knows that his mind has been perverted by bad counsel and false opinion ; that beneath the faults of custom and prejudice he possesses a noble nature, and that his very pride will revolt at his vicious courses as soon as he is made to see them in their true nature ; and this he is not likely to do until he is made to feel through the contempt and scorn of those who command his respect, the infamy attaching to them ; she intends, therefore, not to restrict herself merely to the performance of the task imposed by Bertram as the condition of his accepting her as a wife, but means that he shall gladly do so, both as essential to his own safety and as a duty and an atonement he owes to her and to his own honor. Consequently she so frames the accusation of Diana against him as most to work upon his pride and his sense of honor and right. The charge is made by Diana ; it is proved by Parolles ; and the King, indignant and contemptuous, stands ready to enforce the penalty ; Lafeu openly expresses his scorn ; all of Bertram's friends turn away from him as a dishonored man ; he is bowed to the earth by the shame and disgrace of his situation ; "he boggles shrewdly ;" when at this juncture, Helen (who has been lamented as dead, and of whom he had spoken as one



“ Whom all men prais'd and I, since I have lost,  
Have lov'd ”) —

reappears, and he discovers that by her he is rescued from degradation; that even the charge against him is by her intervention absolutely without foundation; that her love has shielded him throughout; and in the joy and gratitude of his heart, as well as through the stings of his conscience, he not only receives her as a wife, but with sincere contrition solicits pardon for his offenses. The scales of a false pride drop from his eyes, and he at last sees things as they are, recognizing that Helen's truth and love ennobled her more than any rank could do, and that such qualities alone are worthy of the highest distinction.

The Countess interests us by her sweetness, her dignity, and her sorrows. Her heart is burdened with grief at the misconduct of Bertram and the trials of Helen. Her good sense and long experience make her a wise counselor and efficient assistant; she always sees and advises what is best, and in all things manifests honesty of purpose. Skillful in reading the heart, she draws from Helen a confession of her secret love, but at once gives her all her sympathy and all the aid in her power. She has been left a widow with the care of a son, who is just entering on manhood, and who has been commanded by the King to attend him at court. She parts from him with great misgiving, for she knows how ill prepared he is for the temptations of the world, and tells Lafew, “ 'Tis an *unseasoned* courtier; *advise him.* ” Her fears soon prove well founded; reports of his disobedience to the King and of his cruelty to Helen soon reach her, and she discerns with equal clearness the faults of the son of her blood and the virtues of the child of her adoption. Although of high rank herself, she pays no heed to arbitrary distinctions; she recognizes in Helen a worth superior to any merely factitious rank, and loves and honors it accordingly. She is balanced between natural affection for her son and her love for her adopted daughter, and says:

“ Which of them both  
Is dearest to me I have no skill in sense  
To make distinction.”

With all her refinement and kindness of nature, she is conspicuous also for business capacity. She decides her course almost intuitively.

She is tolerant of the faults of the young, having remembrance of her own youthful days, when passion strove to gain the upper hand of reason, and thus comments on Helen's love : —

“ Even so it was with me when I was young ;  
If we are nature's, these are ours ; this thorn  
Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong ;  
Our blood to us, this to our blood is born ;  
It is the shew and seal of nature's truth,  
When love's strong passion is imprest in youth :  
By our remembrances of days foregone,  
Such were our faults, or then we thought them none,” etc.

The Countess possesses that loveliness of character which comes from a genuine desire for the happiness of others, and constant exertions to promote it.

Lafeu is a courtier who has grown gray in the service of the king, with whom he is a sort of privileged person ; he is a humorist and a man of the world, and is distinguished for his knowledge of character. The King, Helen, Parolles, the Clown, all come under review, and he speaks of each according to his merit. His experience enables him to make true distinctions. None escape him ; he causes the Clown to draw a distinction between a fool and a knave, which proves him both. His business is to unveil those about him. He carries into age the vivacity of youth, and his lively fancy and figurative style give spirit and animation to his talk. In his own character, he is brave and loyal ; an apologist for the faults of youth when they proceed from heat of blood and inexperience, but treating with utter scorn and contempt what is intrinsically base and ignoble.

The two “ French lords ” are admirable characters ; spirited, honorable, courteous, and, though young and buoyant, yet moral, sententious, and severe. Some of their reflections upon Bertram's conduct remind us of what “ the lofty grave tragedians taught, in chorus or iambic ” ; and they, too, are a kind of chorus in the running comments they keep up on Bertram's doings and failings. Their punctilious morality emphasizes by contrast his license. They have old heads on young shoulders, and draw true lines of distinction.

The Clown has a clear mind hidden under an affected confusion of thought and language. He delights in self-contradictions and inconsistency. His purpose seems to be to misunderstand, per-



plex, and confuse all with whom he speaks. As a specimen of his style, we may take his answer to Helen, who asks him if the Countess is well.

*Clo.* She is not well, but yet she has her health : she 's very merry ; but yet she 's not well : but, thanks be given, she 's very well and wants nothing i' the world ; but yet she is not well.

*Helen.* If she be very well, what does she ail that she is not very well ?

*Clo.* Truly, she 's very well, but for two things.

*Hel.* What two things ?

*Clo.* One, that she 's not in heaven, whither God send her quickly ! the other, that she 's in earth, from whence God send her quickly !"

The following is a specimen of his willful misconstruction of words.

*"Countess.* Commend me to my kinsmen and my son,  
*This is not much.*

*Clo.* *Not much commendation* to them.

*Countess.* *Not much employment* for you. *You understand me."*

In almost all he says we hear an undertone of irony and of cynicism. He seems to take pleasure in the disgraces and troubles of others. Lafeu tersely describes him "a *shrewd* knave and an *unhappy*."

An instance of his bitter humor occurs in the scene where Parolles asks him to deliver a note to Lafeu, at the same time saying, in allusion to his lowness of fortune, that "he was muddled in fortune's moat and smells somewhat strongly of her strong displeasure ;" a metaphorical statement which the Clown is pleased to take as a literal fact and thereupon to express his infinite contempt for him under an affected disgust at his malodorous condition.

The Clown illustrates the uncertainty of language as a vehicle of meaning. In a Shakespearian play, there are always passages and particular examples given which exemplify the special relation that language holds to the side of life represented. In *All 's Well*, etc., we have the world of active affairs, in which men must clearly understand the meaning of words used in making promises and other engagements ; their minds must meet in an understanding of the words in the same sense. This is not always easy of accomplishment, both through the inadequacy of words themselves, their unconscious misuse, or wilful perversion. This imperfection, and what may be called treachery, of words is largely illustrated by the Clown's misconstructions ; he likes to tease by obscuring and



confusing matters ; as when Bertram has fled to Florence, the Clown enters and breaks out ; —

*Clown.* O madam, yonder is heavy news within between two soldiers and my young lady.

*Countess.* What is the matter ?

*Clo.* Nay, there is *some comfort* in the news, some comfort ; *your son will not be kill'd* as soon as I thought he would.

*Count.* *Why should he be kill'd ?*

*Clo.* So say I, madam, *if he run away, as I hear he does ; the danger is in standing to 't . . Here, they come, will tell you more. For my part, I only hear your son was run away.*"

In short, *Mr. Lavatch* appears to stand for two sides of the play ; he possesses a clear mind while he affects great confusion both of thought and language.

There are other allusions to this relation of language to the understanding, some of which it may be well to note. Thus Lafeu addresses Parolles : —

"Your lord and master did well to make his *recantation*.

*Par.* *Recantation ? my lord ? my master ?*

*Lafeu.* Aye ; is it not a *language* I speak ?

*Par.* A most harsh one : and not to be *understood* without bloody succeeding. *My master ?*"

So Bertram, being told that Parolles had sat all night in the stocks, asks how he had borne himself.

*Ber.* How does he carry himself ?

*Lord.* I have told your lordship already : *the stocks carry him.* But to answer your lordship as you would *be understood*, he weeps like a wench," etc.

If in ordinary cases, the intent of a speaker is difficult to be correctly understood through the imperfection or the deceit of speech, how much more difficult must it be with a man like Parolles, who, as his name (*paroles*) denotes, is in all he pretends to — courage, truth, honor, exploits — but mere empty words and "exterior language." He is, however, exceedingly specious, but Helen with unerring discernment looks through him. She says : —

"One that goes with him. I love him for his sake,  
And yet I know him a notorious liar,  
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward ;  
Yet these *fix'd evils* sit so fit in him  
That they take place, when virtue's steely bones  
Look bleak in the cold wind : full oft we see  
Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly."

Act. I. Sc. 1.

This speciousness, which Helen alludes to as gilding Parolles' vices and even rendering them acceptable, is his chief characteristic. It manifests itself even in his outward attire, which is gay with "scarfs and bannerets and sword-knots," and what with this showy appearance and what with his wit and knowledge of the world, he imposes for a time upon the judgment of many, who take him for a valiant man, a great traveler and linguist and skillful soldier. Even Lafeu confesses that he was deceived by him for a time, saying, "I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might pass; yet the scarfs and the bannerets about thee did manifoldly dissuade one from believing thee a vessel of too great a burden. I have now *found thee*," etc.

To the same purport one of the French lords says to Bertram: "You do not know him, my lord, as we do: certain it is, he will steal himself into a man's favour, and, for a week, escape a great deal of discoveries; but when you *find him out*, you have him ever after."

Like all men of corrupt hearts, Parolles has no sound discernment of right and wrong, but measures all things by "utility and fortune." When Helen jestingly asks his advice (Act I. Sc. 1) he gives her instructions on a moral point, which are governed wholly by considerations of utility; and in his letter to Diana, the advice contained in it turns entirely upon profit and advantage:—

"When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold and take it."

So utterly is he wanting in a perception of moral differences that he is insensible alike to honor and to shame; so that when exposed and shown up to the camp he accepts the disgrace with a certain satisfaction, since he now can practice his meanest arts without fear as no contempt can touch him further. He says:—

"Rust, sword! cool, blushes! and Parolles live  
*Safest in shame; being fool'd, by foolery thrive;  
 There's place and means for every man alive.*"

As Parolles is a personification of false and specious words and lives by the deceptions of language, it is poetic justice that he should be tricked—not by words, but by the mere semblances of words. The plotters against him know that he has "a smack of all neighbouring languages," and therefore, in order that he

may think them a band of strangers, they agree to use in way of speech, mere unmeaning sounds, "chough's language, gabble enough and good enough." So when they meet and blindfold him he hears this jargon, and says, "I know you are the Muskos regiment and I *shall lose my life for want of language.*"

Bacon often speaks of words as having a speciousness in themselves by which error is gilded and made to pass current; so likewise he speaks of sciences that are made of words and are incapable of works. And it would seem to be not over fanciful, if we view this piece as a parable play, to take Parolles, who is all brag and inefficiency and consequently the negative of Helen who is all skill and works, as a representative, from the comic point of view, of those wordy and incapable sciences which Bacon so much derides.

Each play of Shakespeare's gives occasion to remark that one of the special excellences of Shakespearian art is the perfect balance which is preserved throughout of the leading conceptions involved in its "form" or constructive law. These conceptions reappear constantly in the diction and phraseology, and impart to the work symmetry as well as unity of impression. Some of these are, of course, more prominent than the others, but there is always one which is specially dwelt upon, inasmuch as it is derived from the very central meaning of the piece. In *All's Well*, etc., this prominent thought is "distinction," for what is a distinction or true difference is the question raised by the play out of which all its incidents grow. Therefore we shall find *distinction* and its opposite *indistinction*, with all related and analogous terms meeting us on every page in diction, phrase, and thought.

Of words affined in meaning with distinction are obviously all those implying *division*, *definition*, *disjunction*, or that which makes *distinct* or separate, as to *part*, to *loose*, etc. But since that which is *distinct* is *clear* to the mind or the sight, there is a frequent recurrence of words affined with *clearness*, physical or moral, as *clean*, *pure*, etc. Also phrases like *point by point*, *son by son*, etc.

On the other hand, with *indistinction*, are associated terms implying *confusion*, *mixing*, *union*, etc. Also those significant of *indifference*, as *equality*, *evenness*, *identity*, etc., and those opposed to *clear*, *pure*, as *corrupt*, *muddy*, *unclean*, and others.



The examples cited are confined to those in which the notions of *distinction* and *indistinction* are contained or implied in the thought, and are not merely words affined in signification.

The following are instances of *indistinction* : —

“It were *all one*  
That I should love a bright particular star,” etc.

“To stand on *either part*.”

“Have fought *with equal fortune*.”

“*You and all flesh and blood*.”

“Howsoe’er their *hearts are severed in religion*, their *heads are both one*.”

[This last phrase contains both *indistinction* and its opposite.]

“He and his physicians *are of a mind*.”

“The web of our life is *of a mingled yarn*.”

“*Both sides rogue*.”

“*E’en a crow of the same nest*.”

“His *villainous saffron* would have made *all the youth of his color*,” etc.

“You have made *the days and nights as one*.”

“Dost thou put upon me both the *office of God and the devil*.”

“That your Dian was *both herself and love*.”

“*A sunshine and a hail at once*.”

“For I by vow am *so embodied yours*,  
That she *that marries you must marry me*,  
Either *both or none*.”

“I took *this lark for a bunting*.”

This list is not exhaustive; there are many other examples of *indifference* and *indistinction* in the piece.

In the following is found the thought of *distinction*, either through *preëminence*, or *division*, *contrast*, *opposition*, and the like : —

“Whose high respect and rich validity  
Did *lack a parallel*.”

“There is nothing here that’s *too good for him*  
*But only she*.”

“Thy blood and virtue contend for empire in thee.”

“Put you in *the catalogue of those*.”

"I am from humble, he from honour'd name."

"Highly fed and lowly taught."

"The great dignity that his valour hath here acquired for him shall at home be encounter'd by a shame as ample."

"His left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a half,  
And his right cheek is worn bare."

"When his disgrace and he is parted."

"So to dissever our great self and our credit."

"Our parting is as a tortur'd body."

There are others, but examples need not be multiplied.

These niceties of workmanship are, perhaps, rather curious than important. Though they elude observation until attention is particularly drawn to them, they no doubt contribute to the pleasure of the reader by giving uniformity of tone to the work and strengthening the impression made by the main idea. They prove, moreover, that Shakespeare was boundless in his resources of thought and language; that his rapidity and ease were not those of carelessness but of strength, and that he gave such attention to the minutest details that there is scarcely a line or a word that cannot be accounted for.

The most valuable rule is one that is sure to produce the desired effect, and such rule is attainable only by the discovery of the true difference or formal cause, which, when invented and stated, is an axiom or "instrument of practice." And it is a part of Bacon's system to prepare "Tables of Discovery," or what he also calls "Tables of Rules of Practice," containing the axioms discovered, to which recourse can be had when needed. The many counsels, cautions, and precepts contained in this play liken it in its matter to such a table, but there are in it also passages and incidents which may fairly be taken as parallels and illustrations in the human or moral world to Bacon's process for making such discoveries in the physical world.

In treating of *The Merchant of Venice*, it was shown that the notion of inquiry or *quest* (which is the business of a merchant) was constantly repeated in various forms, and was incorporated into the action of the piece; as in the *quest* of Portia by the suitors, and in the trial or *question* on the bond; and that the predominance of this conception was attributable to the comedy's

being a presentation of instances in which the question of true value was raised, corresponding (as far as is compatible with the dramatic form) to such a collection of materials as Bacon called "A Table of *Inquiry* and Invention." In *All's Well*, etc. the poet varies his effects by taking up the other branch of the title, that is, *Invention* or *Discovery* as a working principle, and making his piece correspond to a *table of discovery*, in which the personages concern themselves in the *discovery of men's characters*, with a view of estimating the degree in which they are governed by reason, "the true difference" of man, or, in other words, the measure of their integrity and ability to effect ends and consequent claim to *distinction*.

The question of a "true distinction" grows directly out of the fable, the incidents of which are consequent upon the compulsory marriage of Bertram, a noble of the highest rank, to Helena, who, notwithstanding her superior mental and moral excellence, is rejected by Bertram as a wife on account of her low degree. This obviously raises a question whether true distinction consists in blood and birth, as in Bertram, or in knowledge and virtue, as in Helen? The answer must depend upon what is the "true difference" in man; and since the aim and object of the Baconian philosophy is the "true difference" of things, the play offers a direct parallel in the moral world to such philosophy, and one so close, indeed, that the piece may be taken as a parable, veiling under its characters and incidents the principal steps in the Baconian process, besides exemplifying Operative Philosophy in that branch of it which depends upon Efficient Causes, and is styled *Mechanics*.

But, first, the doctrines must be briefly set forth, which the parable both conceals and illustrates.

Of the natures and properties of the substances that compose the physical world, it is the aim of Bacon's philosophy to discover the cause or inward law, by the working of which any particular nature is made *what it is*. To know this law or cause, or, in scholastic language, *form*, is to know a rule of practice for the production of the effect.

"For what in contemplation is as the cause, in operation is as the rule." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 3.

This cause was also called "the true difference" because the essential nature that was produced by its operation was defined by it and differenced from all other kinds.



And in Valerius Terminus, probably his earliest work on "the interpretation of nature," Bacon says that the matter which he aims at "is not much other than that which they term the form or formal cause, or that which they call the true difference. . . . For Plato casteth his burden, and saith that he 'will *revere him as a God that can truly divide and define*,' which cannot be but by true form and differences."

Bacon divides Operative Philosophy into Mechanics and Magic; and "as Physic and the Inquisition of Efficient and Material causes produce Mechanics, so Metaphysic and the inquiry of forms produce Magic: for the inquiry of final causes is barren, and, like a virgin consecrated to God, produces nothing." De Aug. Book III. ch. v.

This exclusion of *final causes*, however, does not apply "to sciences which have to do with human action." Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 2.

On the contrary, they are the true efficient in the moral world, for the end, motive, or object of desire is the cause of all voluntary action. Hence a motive is called "a spring of action."

In the affairs of men final causes or ends are almost the only ones which are to be considered, as it is for the sake of them that men form and execute their plans; and when through policy they act on the minds of others by suggesting motives that impel them to some particular line of action, these motives, though final causes in themselves, are efficient causes with respect to such action; in the moral world, therefore, they and the contrivances they give rise to are precisely analogous with efficient causes in the physical world, the application of which to the production of effects Bacon denominates *Mechanics*.

But *mechanics* must be taken in a broad sense, and as corresponding with its Greek etymon μηχανη, which is not only the same as the Latin *machina*, a machine or engine or any contrivance or artificial means of doing a thing (which in the moral world is any help or aid we induce others to give us in effecting our ends), but also in the plural, signifies *wiles, arts, deceptions, craft, cunning, skill, means, resources*, etc., and is affined also with words signifying *counsel, advice*, etc.

There is an English derivative from the Latin *machina*, viz., *machination*, which has both a moral and an intellectual sense,

for it means devices for a bad purpose. So *practice* means the use of *good or evil arts*.

It becomes obvious as soon as stated that the play illustrates *Mechanics* or the application of causes to produce effects. To this end are all the tricks and stratagems that the persons of the play use to move others and accomplish their ends; for instance, the deceptions which Helen resorts to to perform her task, or the plot against Parolles, or the indignities which Lafeu heaps upon him to test his courage; and indeed the whole action of the piece is carried on by artifices and the operation of effects, affording many examples of "practice" or craftily working upon the motives of men in order to influence their action to some particular end.

The diction of the play is largely infused with terms borrowed from mechanics, engineering, and the military art; and it is curious to observe how the dialogue introduces suggestions of efficient causes, it being remembered that an *efficient* is a "cause that moves," or as it is sometimes defined, "the cause of a cause." For instance, the Countess orders the Steward to write to Bertram that Helen had left Rousillon, in order that he may be induced to return; but this she does to the further end that Helen, hearing of his being there, may also return herself.

"Write, write, Rinaldo,  
To this unworthy husband of his wife.

When haply he shall hear that she is gone,  
He will return; and hope, I may, that she,  
Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,  
Led hither by pure love."

Act III. Sc. 4.

Another similar instance is Helen's argument that if Bertram is killed in battle, she is guilty of his death, as she had driven him to become a soldier.

"Whoever shoots at him, I set him there,  
Whoever charges on his forward breast  
I am the caitiff that do hold him to it;  
And, though I kill him not, I am the cause  
His death was so effected."

Act III. Sc. 2.

The fertility of mind of the dramatist and his painstaking in small matters may be seen in the ingenuity with which he suits

his rhetorical figures to the prevailing tone of the piece, — in this case, an exhibition of causes that produce mechanical effects, — of which there is a good example in the metaphor, by which *honour* is likened to a *clock*.

“ His honour,  
*Clock to itself*, knew the true minute when  
 Exception bade him speak and then his *tongue*  
*Obej'd his* (i. e. the clock's) *hand*.”

Act I. Sc. 2.

But besides the analogy that the play affords between physical Mechanics or the application of forces to work physical results, and what may be termed *moral* Mechanics, or the application of *motives* to the wills of men to direct their action, there is also a more general correspondence between this piece and Bacon's Process taken in its larger and more prominent features, that is, the discovery of the true difference of which process the play is supposed to be an allegorical image.

The play puts before us a picture of moral progress and the conduct of life and affairs, all which call for a correct exercise of judgment on the characters of men. But the action of the judgment is the same with respect to moral as to physical facts, and needs the same supports in the one case as in the other. To supply these supports was the express end for which Bacon invented his *Organum* or *Machine*, wherewith to help the mind in arriving at a true judgment. It was not published until 1620, or four years after Shakespeare's death. Bacon, however, had been meditating for many years on the shape in which it was best to give his method to the world, and had written several treatises in different styles by way of experiment, such as his *Valerius Terminus* and the *Cogitata et Visa*, in which he declares an intention of giving an example of his Process in a Table of Inquiry and Invention, which he speaks of as a description of the work as it were *visible* (*operis descriptionem fere visibilem*). Among these early writings was also a tract entitled *Secundæ Partis Delineatio*, in which is contained a sketch in general terms of the different steps of his Process. But none of these early attempts were published in Bacon's lifetime, nor did they see the light until 1653, or about twenty-seven years after his death, when Gruter put out at Amsterdam a small volume containing about a score of these pieces. Of course, Shakespeare could never have read them



unless in the Latin manuscripts, and of the probability of this one may guess.

The *Secundæ Partis Delineatio* is supposed by Spedding to have been composed 1606-1607, which is about the time commentators assign as the date of *All's Well*, etc., in the mature form in which we now have it. In it, Bacon divides his Process into three parts; the first of which is the *pars destruens* or extirpating part, which is devoted to eradicating from the mind its faulty methods of demonstration as well as its prejudices arising from education, custom, and other causes, innate and adventitious. The result of this process is a correct exercise of judgment, and this is seen in Helen, as its contrary is in Bertram; the one being free from all delusion arising from imagination, feeling, or otherwise, while the other, blinded and perverted as he is, by condition of life and ungoverned passions, is a true picture of a mind beset by those warping prejudices and partialities which Bacon called "idols."

The second part was the *pars præparans*, the office of which was to gain a fair hearing for the subject by removing from the mind all doubts and suspicions of its importance or worthiness. This need not detain us, though we may see something of this anxiety in the pains which Helen takes to remove from the mind of Widow Capulet all doubts as to the honesty and truth of her statement and purposes. Act III. Sc. 7 and Act IV. Sc. 4.

The third part is the *pars informens*, which gives instructions as to the Process itself. This process was divided into three ministrations: 1. To the senses. 2. To the memory. 3. To the reason. And in a play which depicts man as dependent on helps in all the transactions of his life, it is quite in keeping with its design to exemplify the helps of the mind also.

The ministration to the senses was for the purpose (among others) of correcting its mistakes, and by instruments or experiments to supply aids when its natural powers fail: for instance, in the case of things imperceptible by the sense, they were to be urged by experiment to some effect of which the sense could take notice. An emotion of the mind is imperceptible by the sense until expressed in countenance or language; and a beautiful example is given of the intentional forcing of a feeling to such expression in the dialogue in which the Countess artfully works upon Helen's secret love and compels it to an outward expression perceptible to the sense.

"Countess. You know, Helen, I am a mother to you.

Helen. Mine honourable mistress.

Count. Nay, a mother ;

*Why not a mother ? when I said a mother*

*Methought you saw a serpent. What's in mother*

*That you start at it ? I say, I am your mother.*

God's merey, maiden ! does it curd thy blood

To say, I am thy mother ? What's the matter

That this *distemper'd messenger of wet,*

The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye ?

Why ? that you are my daughter ?

*Hel.* You are my mother, madam ; would you were

(So that my lord, your son, were not my brother)

Indeed my mother.

Can 't no other

But, I your daughter, he must be my brother ?

Count. Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law :

God shield you mean it not ! daughter and mother

So strive upon your pulse : what, *pale again ?*

My fear hath catch'd your fondness. Now, *I see*

*The mystery of your loneliness and find*

*Your salt tears' head. Now to all sense 't is gross*

*You love my son : invention is asham'd*

*Against the proclamation of thy passion*

To say thou dost not. For *look, thy cheeks*

*Confess it one to the other, and thine eyes*

*See it so grossly shown in thy behaviour,*

*That in their kind they speak it," etc.*

Act I. Sc. 3.

Besides its pertinency as illustrative of "a ministration to the sense," this passage is an example of "practice" or *working* and *discovering*, and, furthermore, it exhibits in dramatic life Operative Philosophy or *Mechanics*.

Ministration to the memory embraces that most important feature of the Baconian process, viz., the tabulation of materials and particulars in some form that will enable the understanding more readily to act upon them. It consists of writing down the points of inquiry with respect to a given subject in the nature of Topics and forming them into tables, in which the questions shall be set forth in proper order and the answers duly subjoined. An example of this — brief of necessity, as a full table could hardly be introduced into a drama, and in this case still more brief in

quotation, by reason of the grossness of Parolles' mind — is given in the scene where Parolles is examined with regard to the forces and officers of the Florentine camp.

Parolles is brought in blindfolded ; a soldier acts as examiner.

*Sold.* He calls for the tortures ; what will you say without them ?

*Par.* I will confess what I know without constraint. . . .

*Sold.* Our general bids you to answer what *I shall ask you out of a note.*

*Par.* And truly as I hope to live.

*Sold.* 'First demand of him how many horse the duke is strong ?' What say you to that ?

*Par.* Five or six thousand : but very weak and unserviceable : the troops are all scattered, and the commanders very poor rogues, upon my reputation and credit, and as I hope to live.

*Sold.* Shall I *set down your answer so ?*

*Par.* I'll take the sacrament on 't, how and which way you will.

*Sold.* *Well, that's set down.*

*Par.* Five or six thousand horse, I said — I will say true — or thereabouts *set down*, for I'll speak truth.

*1 Lord.* He is very near the truth in this.

*Ber.* But I con him no thanks for 't, in the nature he delivers it.

*Par.* Poor rogues, I pray you, say.

*Sold.* *Well, that's set down.*

*Par.* I humbly thank you, sir ; a truth's a truth, the rogues are marvelous poor.

*Sold.* 'Demand of him what strength they are a-foot ?' What say you to that ?

*Par.* By my troth, sir, if I were to live this present hour, I will tell true. Let me see : Spurio, a hundred and fifty ; Sebastian, as many ; Corambus, as many ; Jaques, so many ; Gultian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii, two hundred and fifty each ; mine own company ; Christopher, Vaumond, Bentii, two hundred and fifty each ; so that the muster-file, rotten and sound, upon my life, amount not to fifteen thousand poll ; half of the which dare not shake the snow from their cassocks, lest they shake themselves to pieces.

*Sold.* *Well, that's set down.*

But we are told in the *Delineatio* that the topics are not merely to be in writing, but are to be digested according to some *division*, "for truth will sooner emerge from a *division*, though false, than it will from *confusion*."

Of this necessity of a division into parts, there seems to be a recognition in the following passage. It is the continuation of Parolles' examination. The soldier who acts as Examiner still puts questions from his written topics : —



“*Sold.* (reading from his notes.) ‘You shall demand of him whether one Captain Dumain be in the camp, a Frenchman ; what his reputation is with the Duke ; what his valour, honesty, and expertness in war ; or whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to a revolt ? What say you to this ? What do you know of it ?

*Par.* I beseech you, let me answer to the *particular of the intergatories : Demand them singly.*

*Sold.* Do you know this Captain Dumain ?

*Par.* I know him : he was a botcher’s prentice in Paris,” etc.

And so the inquiry goes on through a long scene which, though interspersed with remarks of bystanders in order to give it life and prevent its being a bald scientific examination, is yet close enough to one to be considered a fair dramatic imitation.

With respect to the ministration to the reason, Bacon says that “ministration is chiefly to be approved that most assists the reason in executing its work and attaining its end. The work of the reason is one in nature, but in its end and use double. For the end of man is either to know and contemplate or to act and execute : wherefore the design of human knowledge is to know the cause of a given effect or quality in any object of thought, and again the design of human agency is upon a given basis of matter to build up and superinduce any effect or quality within the limits of possibility. And these designs on a close examination and just estimate are seen to coincide. *For that which in contemplation stands for a cause, in operation stands for a means or instrument. Men know through causes and operate by means. . . .* As respects the contemplative part, to say it in a word, it all turns on one point, and that is no other than this, that a *true axiom be established* and the same be made conjunctive with other axioms.”<sup>1</sup> Wood’s Translation of Sec. Part. Del.

The direction which Bacon lays down in physical philosophy for the formation of a rule or axiom as a help to the reason is the same as the advice which he gives with respect to the Wisdom of Business in human philosophy ; that is, to condense what experience may teach as useful in life into an aphorism or maxim as a rule of practice.

<sup>1</sup> The corresponding passage, *Novum Organum*, is as follows : “On a given body to generate and superinduce a new nature in the work and aim of Human Power. Of a given nature to discover the form or true difference . . . is the aim and work of Human Knowledge.” *Nov. Org.* Book II. Aph. 1.

And, generally, that which in human philosophy answers to the axioms of science derived from the discovery of the true differences of things are the rules deduced from the unfolding of the principles of the reason, the true difference of man. These principles include the precepts of morality, policy, prudence, and the conduct of life generally, which are implicit in various degrees in the natures and characters of men, and qualify them for operating certain effects. They constitute wisdom, morality, virtue, duty, policy, and not only endow their possessors with these qualities, but are the means of generating and superinducing them on the natures of other men.

But an axiom in a play, which is meant for a parable-play, that exemplifies a method of producing effects, must be of so general a nature as to be applicable to all cases. As for physical results, — and such are to a certain degree embraced in the plot of the piece, — Bacon lays down the conditions that appertain to all rules for the production of material effects, saying “that man has no power over nature except that of motion — the power, I say, of putting natural bodies together or separating them, and that the rest is done by nature working within. Whenever, therefore, there is a possibility of moving natural bodies towards one another or away from one another, men and art can do everything; where there is no such possibility, they can do nothing.” *Int. Globe, ch. ii.*

In the moral world, this rule must be equally general; but moral axioms have reference to moral effects; they operate upon the motives and wills of men, and determine their course of action. Such an axiom is “All is well that ends well,” which is universal in its application, and as inspiring patience, hope, and perseverance, and thus operating upon the minds of men, suits very well in a parable-play that help or ministration to the reason derived from an axiom or rule of practice; and we see it is so used in the piece. Helen, in order to support the courage and hope of her coadjutors (who are all-essential to her success) cites, whenever they lose heart, this maxim, —

*“All’s well that ends well; still the fine’s the crown;  
Whate’er the course, the end is the renown.”*

*Act V. Sc. 4.*

And again, when Widow Capulet is discouraged at not finding the King at Marseilles, and exclaims in her disappointment,



"Lord, how we lose our pains!" Helen reassures her, and revives her spirits with the same truth, —

" 'All's well that ends well,' yet,  
Though *time seems so adverse, and means unfit.*"

The fact that the proverb is introduced twice into the dialogue, and in both instances to inspire hope and courage, is pretty good proof of an intention on the part of the dramatist of laying stress upon its purport and meaning. Besides that, it is introduced once again in the two closing lines of the play and, moreover, is alluded to in the Epilogue.

Another help or ministration to the reason, which Bacon held to be very important, are Prerogative Instances, as he terms them, which are such as excel others by shedding a particular light on the subject of inquiry.

Among these are *Instances of Magic*, by which, he says, "I mean those wherein the *material or efficient cause* is *scanty or small* as compared with the *work and effect produced*, so that, even where *they are common*, *they seem like miracles.*"

Of these, Lafeu's remarks upon the King's cure are an example.

"Lafeu. They say miracles are past, and we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar things supernatural and causeless. . . .

Par. Why, 't is the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times.

Lafeu. To be relinquished of the artists —

Par. So I say.

Lafeu. Both of Galen and Paracelsus, of all the learned and authentic fellows —

Par. Right, — so I say.

Lafeu. That gave him out incurable —

Par. Why, there 't is, so I say, too.

Lafeu. Not to be help'd.

Par. Right; as 't were a man assured of a —

Lafeu. Uncertain life and sure death.

Par. Just, you say well, so would I have said.

Lafeu. I may truly say, it is a novelty in the world . . . a showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor . . . the very hand of heaven.

Par. Ay, so I say.

Lafeu. In a most weak and debile minister great power, great transcendence," etc. Act II. Sc. 3.

Other prerogative instances are termed "*Polychrest or Instances of General Use.*" They are those which relate to a variety of cases and occur frequently.



These are paralleled by the Clown's "answer to all questions" — and it is not infrequently the case in these plays that the most serious matters of philosophy are turned over to the Fool to elucidate.

*Clown.* — but for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

. . . . .

*Count.* Have you an answer of such fitness for all questions ?

*Clo.* From below your duke to beneath your constable, it will fit any question.

*Count.* It must be an answer of monstrous size that must fit all demands ?

*Clo.* But a trifle neither ; in good faith, if the learned should speak truth of it ; here it is and all that belongs to it : ask me if I am a courtier ; it shall do you no harm to learn.

*Count.* To be young again if we could, I will be a fool in question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir, are you a courtier ?

*Clo.* O Lord, sir — there 's a simple putting off — more, more, a hundred of them.

*Count.* Sir, I am a poor friend of yours that love you.

*Clo.* O Lord, sir — thick, thick, spare not me.

*Count.* I think, sir, you can eat more of this homely meat.

*Clo.* O Lord, sir — Nay, put me to 't — I warrant you.

*Count.* You were lately whipped, sir, as I think.

*Clo.* O Lord, sir — spare not me.

*Count.* Do you cry 'O Lord, sir,' at your whipping, and 'spare not me' ? . . .

*Clo.* I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my 'O Lord, sir.' I see things may serve long, but not serve ever," etc. Act II. Sc. 2.

In sum, then, what in contemplation is the cause, in operation is the means. And the "form" or "true difference" of things is that in which dwells their operative effect ; and so with men, their efficiency as helps in business depends upon their real natures, and these we must discover by ascertaining in what degree they possess the characteristic of their kind, namely, the reason as developed into principles and rules, and forming a character for virtue and knowledge. To read character is to discover "the true difference." And as the natures of things and their effective properties are discovered by trial and experiment, so are men and their efficiency, or their want of it, also tested by trial, as in the cases of Helen, Bertram, and Parolles, is notably instanced.

Men are also known by Practice, or by artfully working upon the mind so as to lead to confessions and betrayals of ends and purposes, by which the secret character is laid bare for good or for evil ; and the instances of this given in the play serve also,

as we have seen, for analogies to those productions of effect in the physical world which are styled *Mechanics*.

But since the discovery of the "true difference" yields a rule of practice, Bacon directs that tables be formed of such rules, from which can be selected such means as may be required for operating any special effect; they were manuals of practice, to which answer in the moral world manuals of morality or any collection of proverbs and precepts, by which moral effects are produced. But as character is the "true difference" in men, a knowledge of character enables one to make a correct choice of instruments for the effecting of ends; for a man of virtue and knowledge, or say of honesty and skill (which are the terms used in the play as adapted to its subject), through which he is qualified for some particular work, may be considered an embodied axiom or instrument of practice, all necessary rules and principles being knit up in his character, and a play exhibiting personages of this practical kind, and whose efficiency is put before us in action, may be looked upon as a table, "as it were animate," of rules of practice. And, therefore, in *All's Well*, etc., in which the highest type of effective service is the subject of inquiry, we find a class of personages marked by different degrees of skill and honesty, among whom there are two extreme types, affirmative and negative, that is, Helen and Parolles (and it must be remembered that in Bacon's tables there is always a chart of negative instances, "since negatives attached to affirmatives are of great use for the information of the mind"), Helen standing for the supreme degree of ability and virtue, as Parolles does of inefficiency and baseness. She is also contrasted with Bertram, in which case the comparison is made on intellectual grounds, her clear intellect and perception of true differences being foiled by his confusion of thought and ignorance of men. These extremes may be supposed to include all intermediate grades, thus carrying out the idea of a parable-play, which illustrates generalities and classes by single types and images.

Running through the other characters there are observable different grades of the same qualities that shine so conspicuously in Helen. Thus the Countess and Lafew evince a high degree of rectitude of purpose and acquaintance with human nature; they are both tolerant of youthful error, yet uncompromising in their scorn of dishonor. So, too, the two French lords are deeply im-



bued with morality; they evince great disdain of Bertram's license, and impress us, also, with a sense of their skill as soldiers. In like manner Widow Capulet and Diana both manifest pride of character and regard for reputation, together with honorable sentiments and efficient action; and even the two gossips, Mariana and Violenta, exhibit sincerity of mind and knowledge of life. All these characters have a distinct moral tone, and show the same moral sentiments; they all, moreover, give wise counsel and inculcate morality and prudence.

And this characterization is strictly in accordance with Shakespeare's method, by which he embodies the idea that is the informing soul of the piece, intrinsically in the characters, such idea in this comedy being that of a table or collection of rules of practice.

Thus, in *The Winter's Tale*, which takes for its constructive principle the idea of a work of art, which is to imitate the beautiful, the characters are themselves works of art in so far as they have for a rule to copy moral beauty; or in *Cymbeline*, which being a history or record of experience, the characters are subjected to trials, and are themselves records of experience; or in *Lear*, the idea of which is that of a fable that symbolizes moral truth, the personages of the play are themselves symbols. In like manner, in *All's Well*, etc., which is constructed on the idea of a book of proverbs, or collection of rules of conduct, the characters are themselves in the various degrees of their virtue and knowledge, representatives of rules of practice. This method is one of the causes — and, perhaps, the main one — why these marvelous models of ingenuity and art have so profound a unity of effect.

But honesty and skill that equip their possessor for the most efficient application of knowledge to the use and benefit of man's estate, are entitled to the highest reward and distinction. Of these, Helen is the image, for she renders the greatest services within the limits of human possibility, — rescuing from death by her physical science the King, who had been abandoned by his most learned physicians, and reclaiming by her moral knowledge Bertram from vice to a virtuous life, — and, therefore, to her must the highest distinction be awarded as to one possessing in the greatest degree that wisdom and goodness which in man is “the true difference.”



was derived from *satura*, a Roman word, which signifies *full* and *abundant*, and full also of *variety*. 'T is thus, says Dacier, that we lay a full color, when the wool has taken the whole tincture and drunk in as much of the dye as it can receive. According to this derivation from *Satur* comes *Satura* or *satira*. *Satura* (as I have formerly noted) is an Adjective and relates to the word *laux*, which is understood. And this *laux*, in English a charger or large Platter, was yearly filled with all sorts of fruits, which were offered to the Gods at their festivals as the first Gatherings.

"This word *satura* has been afterward applied to many sorts of mixtures, as Festus calls it a kind of *olla* or *hotch-potch*, made of several sorts of meats. . . . From hence it might be probably conjectured that the *discourses* or *satires* of Ennius, Lucilius and Horace, as we now call them, took their name, because they are full of various matters, and are also written on various subjects."

An eminent modern scholar has the same explanation. "The Latin *satira* takes its name in consequence of the *medley of verses of different metres* and *topics of various natures*, which the earlier writers of satire were accustomed to employ. Varro even mixed prose with poetry and called the pieces *satiræ*" (Anthon's Sall. Bell. Jug. § 24, note).

The word *farce* is applied to a play by similar analogies. It is from the Latin *farcire*, to *stuff*, to *cram*. "With respect to *farce* the noun, it is said by Menage to be a *mixture or medley* of various sorts of viands and applied to a species of comedy, because it is *stuffed or filled* with a *variety* of things or with incidents of *various kinds*" (Rich. Dict. in v.).

In keeping with this "form" or idea of satire being a promiscuous collection of things, the poet in writing this grandest of satires and weightiest of farces, renders it a medley of love, war, politics, poetry, rhetoric, logic, civil and moral philosophy, to say nothing of satire itself and various other matters. In fact, the play contains passages that may be taken as illustrations of all the main branches of Learning appertaining to the Philosophy of Man as laid down by Bacon in *De Augmentis*. Such a variety of topics embracing different and opposite divisions of the same subject, give the picture the effect of disorder and confusion, to which additional force is lent by its being laid upon a background of system, unity, and rule.

The love story of Troilus and Cressida is drawn from Chaucer ; but the main action of the piece has reference to the Trojan war ; and the satire of the play is aimed at the Homeric or heroic ideal as typical of all false ideals. The parody could have no point for a reader unacquainted with the Iliad. The chief characters, incidents, and allusions are taken from Homer, but in order to render the plot more flexible and better adapted to the elucidation of the philosophical principles which — to use the language of the preface — “ are *stuf't* in it,” and at the same time to avoid the charge of laying a sacrilegious hand upon the father of poetry, the playwright went for portions of his plot to the tales of the Trojan war as related by the mediæval romancers after Dycetes or Dares, or as existing in the black-letter of Lydgate or Caxton. In these romances, the Homeric heroes are converted into knights and barons of feudal chivalry ; and, as in the old pageants the most sacred characters and incidents of Holy Writ are unwittingly belittled and made ridiculous by the simplicity and ignorance of both actors and audience, so in these stories, the stately heroes of the Iliad are unconsciously travestied and sunk to the level of the commonplace by the modern air that is given to their manners. This comedy, if it may be called such, handles the famous *epos* in the same spirit, carrying, however, the burlesque one step further ; and while preserving the outline of the Homeric prototypes sufficiently to give the characters a mock dignity, it yet contrasts their boastful pretensions with the meanness and vulgarity of their motives ; and by substituting for heroic elevation and greatness of soul mere bodily bulk and ridiculous vainglory, places them in the light of a serio-comic caricature. They are represented as it were in *pageant*, and are touched with something of the ludicrous effect produced by the magniloquence of “ The Nine Worthies ” when personated in pasteboard armor by the country curate and school-master.

A satire is a species of didactic poetry, and this satirical play is didactic throughout ; it makes no appeal to the heart and feelings, but addresses itself to the mind and instructs us through the reflective faculties solely. Its aim is not to make us more charitable but more wise, and to purge us of error by ridiculing vice, rather than by awakening sympathy with virtue. And inasmuch as it judges the heroic by the moral ideal, which latter is that only which should furnish the rule of life, and, furthermore, as the



English drama itself had its origin in "Mysteries" and "Moralities," the very aim of which was moral instruction, the writer of the play seems to have kept this fact in mind and to have made his work a moral play on a grand scale (with Thersites for Vice) in which the personages, though not embodiments of abstract qualities as in the old "Moralities," — such, for instance, as "Drift," "Unthrift," and "Shift" of "Common Conditions," — yet are representative of certain characteristics already predetermined and proverbially attached to their names; as Agamemnon, Achilles, Ulysses, Nestor, Hector, Troilus, and Cressida stand respectively for rule, pride, policy, experience, courage, truth, and falsehood, while the name of the go-between Pandar has given both a verb and a noun to the language.

Before considering the play in its allegorical meaning or as an "illustrative example," its moral basis will be briefly set forth, from which a better judgment perhaps can be formed of its dramatic scope.

Since, instead of life itself, the play dramatizes an abstract of life, seen through a literary medium, it presents a picture of social man as vague and general as is consistent with any dramatic representation at all. Its ostensible subject is War, out of which grows the heroic ideal, and inasmuch as War originates in the desires and passions that have their centre in self and tend to disunite men, the principles on which the unanimity of Society depends and which form the moral ideal are substructed as a base or background to the action of the piece; and as war, again, is carried on between different nations, such principles must reach beyond merely political or municipal regulations and be broad enough for Human Intercourse at large. These principles are truth and justice, which are ideas of reason, on which are founded those moral rules, which, by restraining the selfish appetites and desires, and directing them to their proper objects, tend to prevent violence and secure peace and concord among men. The play, therefore, views man in relation to *Mankind* or the *species*, which, embracing a vast number of individuals of totally different personalities, binds them all up in one whole by the common attribute of reason. Thus the piece treats of the logical man — man as "a rational animal." This distinguishing characteristic of man, the reason, is the fountain of moral ideas and practical rules; it discerns the one in the many; binds up the manifold in



unity by force of an idea; forms species and genera by classifying objects according to their common attributes, to which classes it gives names, thus creating universals that make up the bulk of language and furnish the indispensable instruments of logic; and on these accounts it is the source of system, unity, and rule. Owing to the moral identity of man, that which is right and true for one is right and true for all, and intercourse becomes possible on the ground of universal consent and a common rule of action. This rule, applicable alike to all mankind, is the idea or image of virtue and wisdom, which, in some degree, every man carries in his breast as the standard of moral excellence. To this idea the ideal holds the same relation that the example does to the rule; it is an archetype which serves as a model for imitation. "Virtue and wisdom," says the illustrious Kant, "in their perfect purity are ideas. But the wise man of the Stoics is an ideal, that is to say, a human being existing only in thought and in complete conformity with the idea of wisdom. As the idea provides a rule, so the ideal serves as an archetype for the perfect and complete determination of the copy. Thus the conduct of this wise and divine man serves as a standard of action, with which we may compare and judge ourselves, although the perfection it demands can never be attained by us." The ideal is, consequently, the Supreme Rule and End of life, which comprises all other rules and ends under it; and in proportion as man conforms his conduct to this exemplar, he is exalted in character and worthy of honor and fame. Like the central form, which embodying the universal in the particular, constitutes the ideal of physical beauty to the supreme perfection of which art can never attain, but of which the completest examples are found in those masterpieces, which furnish the canons of criticism, the ideal of Humanity, representing the *species* or "*form*" of universal man, and alike removed from all extremes, holds that exact centre in which truth and justice reside, and though unattainable in full perfection, finds signal exemplifications in the heroes and benefactors who illustrate the race and stand as patterns of the goodness and greatness of human nature.

"In all things," says Bacon, "there are nobler natures to the dignity and excellence whereof inferior natures aspire as to their sources and origins. So it was not unfitly said of men 'that they have a fiery vigour and a heavenly origin,' for the *assumption*

*or approach of man to the Divine or Angelical nature is the perfection of his form."*

These nobler natures or exemplars are the standards of comparison by which the excellence of each thing in its respective kind is judged, and in proportion as such excellence approximates this perfection of form it is entitled to approbation and becomes a pattern and a rule.

The relation of man, therefore, to mankind or universal man is a logical or mental one; it is the same as a relation to the universal reason, and exists only in the judgment and opinion, good or bad, formed by the World or Public, according to a common standard, upon the words and deeds of every individual. And in this the poet is true to his usual method; since, whatever be the form of moral force that he adopts as the background of a piece, it is always representative of retributive justice, from which proceed alike the rule and the punishment for its violation. But the rule in this instance is the moral ideal, which is elaborated from the ideas of reason common to all men and forms the standard of judgment; and it is this reason that finds voice in public opinion with regard to the wisdom and virtue, or the ignorance and folly exhibited in the actions of men; in the one case conferring *fame*, in the other *disgrace*.

What, then, is the duty involved in this relation of man to universal man, that is, to the *species* or *idea* or *form* of man; or the *ideal* of Humanity, or the exemplar of virtue, or the rule of conduct—for all these are equivalents? Evidently that of *discipline* and the *amendment* of the mind, in order to unfold the ideas of reason, give accuracy to its conceptions, purge it of error and prejudice, exalt the standard of judgment, and thus insure a higher moral practice and progress towards an ideal perfection. By such discipline and imitation of the ideal, men may themselves become patterns and rules for imitation and teach others as well by example as by precept.

But so darkened is the judgment by the appetites and desires originating in hot blood and the grosser qualities of man's nature that the Exemplar of Good is but dimly seen by most minds, and by some probably not at all. Instead of the moral, men worship the heroic ideal. And so far are the ends that men pursue from being consonant with the ideas of reason, that give unity to Society, they are the variable products of appetite, imagination, or



passion, and are the source of rivalry and discord. They are the growth of sensual desires, false valuations, depraved judgments, vain imaginations, fallacious opinions, — such as pleasure, beauty, riches, glory, and the like. To be more true and just, more wise and good than others, excites the ambition of few; but to be acknowledged superior in personal qualities, in strength, and beauty, and courage, to be more powerful and renowned, — these awaken emulation and fill the world with envy and strife.

It is these false ends and aims, the brood of inordinate desires, and especially the false standards by which men judge of the worth of the objects of their pursuit that awaken the ridicule or the indignation of the satirist, who in this play subjects military glory and the heroic ideal to the standard of the true Exemplar of Good, thus holding it up, notwithstanding its assumed dignity, as absurd and ridiculous.

Of the necessity of discipline in order to prevent the ascendancy of the animal nature in man, Thersites, in his coarse way, reminds us when cursing Patroclus: —

“Thyself upon thyself! The *common curse* of mankind, *folly and ignorance*, be thine in great revenue! *Heaven bless thee from a tutor and discipline come not near thee!* Let thy *blood* be thy *direction* till thy death! then if she that lays thee out says that thou art a fair corse, I’ll be sworn and sworn upon ’t, she never shrouded any but lazars. Amen.” Act II. Sc. 3.

To the Supreme Rule, which is the fountain of justice and the law of laws, are subordinated all other rules, whether moral or civil. These last, like the Supreme Rule, must partake of universality and be derived from a wide observation and knowledge of men and affairs. “The experience of one man’s life cannot furnish examples for the events of one man’s life.” Such examples must be gathered from the lives and actions of men in general as recorded in books. This is Learning, and it is Learning only which is sufficiently comprehensive to afford precedents for the various occasions of life. “The wit of one man,” says Bacon, “can no more countervail learning than one man’s means can hold way with a common purse.” By the study of man and his affairs, as set forth under the greatest diversity of circumstances in books and other records of human action, rules may be framed for wise conduct in all emergencies. Such rules are largely exemplified in the proverbs, parables, and maxims which are current among all peoples, and are expressive of the wisdom and



common sense of mankind. In such apophthegms and sayings this comedy abounds. There is scarce a critic who, in treating of this play, has not called attention to the great number of moral and political truths it contains, and, in fact, these are but partial and fragmentary expressions of that perfect virtue and wisdom which is the fundamental idea of the piece. The discipline of the mind, however, together with the study of human nature and the deduction from it of rules and laws, is Philosophy, and Philosophy has, therefore, been styled the guide of life.

Of rule, as the basis of system and the exponent of justice, we find instances in the discussions of the Grecian camp (Act I. Sc. 3), and the debate of the Trojan council (Act II. Sc. 3), the one being fraught with political, the other with moral, wisdom. In the former, Ulysses, in a masterly speech, traces the weakness and inefficiency of the Greeks to faction and "neglect of the *specialty of rule*," and, in the latter, Hector sweeps away as repugnant to "the *law of nature and of nations*" the sophisms of Paris and Troilus, whereby they seek to maintain the wrongful holding of Helen on the ground that honor demands it.

The true idea of manhood being derived from the reason, which is the *differentia*, to use a logical term, which constitutes man a species and distinguishes him from other animals, the heroic or false ideal, which in accordance with the broad and general scale of the play, is presented in the heroes Ajax and Achilles in its most gross and material shape, is but an enhancement to the highest degree of man's animal nature, — such as his physical bulk, strength, and appetites. Of dignity of mind and moral elevation, this ideal is completely discharged. The play throughout suggests the antithesis of mind and matter, of reason and brute force, and shows that as in Nature the forces of matter, if ungoverned by law or "form," would rush with blind impetus to chaos; so in man, his animal propensities and appetites, when unchecked by reason and rule, that is, by "*form*," are carried by their own unguided strength to self-destruction.

"Then every thing includes itself in power,  
Power into will, will into appetite,  
And appetite, a universal wolf,  
So doubly seconded with will and power,  
Must make, perforce, a universal prey,  
And, last, eat up himself."

"It is due to justice," says Bacon, "that man is a god to man, and *not a wolf*."

The desire of superiority, which is strikingly manifested even in the lower animals, pervades every department of human life. From the games of children to the shock of armies there is throughout a spirit of emulation and a struggle for supremacy. Aiming at the exercise of power over others, it is that desire of the heart which needs specially to be checked by reason, that is, by rule. Its direct tendency is to engender rivalry and strife. Justice must interpose between the strong and the weak, and equalize men by giving each his own in the degree of his rights. Without this there could be no consent nor unanimity among men, and consequently no society.

"Strength should be lord of imbecility,  
And the rude son should strike his father dead :  
Force should be right ; or, rather, right and wrong  
(Between whose endless jar justice resides)  
Should lose their names, and so should justice too."

Ulrici maintained that the poet's object in *Troilus and Cressida* was to judge the Greek idea of human greatness by the archetypal standard of Christianity. This opinion has not escaped reprehension at the hands of that school of criticism which scoffs at the supposition that the writer of the Shakespearian plays had any design beyond turning off a literary job for as much money and with as little trouble as possible. But if we note that the spring of action in almost every character is emulation, and that the standard of comparison which the characters make use of to estimate the superiority of one over another is the low one of physical strength and animal courage, which standard itself must be judged by the higher one of the moral ideal, of which in the play satire is the voice, it will appear that Ulrici is right, except that the view of the satirist is by no means confined to Greek herodism and Greek civilization. The comedy is quite as much, if not more, a satire upon the burly warriors and rude chivalry portrayed in the pages of Froissart than upon the immorality of the Homeric poem or the heroism of the fabulous ages of Greece. It is a satire upon war and the spirit of war in general, — war which, abnegating reason, places the decision of right and wrong upon superiority of physical force. Grant the principle of might over right, and *Troilus and Cressida* shows that the result is



inevitable chaos and imbecility. But most especially does it ridicule that love of fame and military glory that is only to be obtained by the indulgence of a spirit of revenge and the slaughter of multitudes of human beings. The poet does not restrict to a particular age or race his philosophical satire, which, in its universality, is applicable to all periods and peoples, and is no less instructive with regard to the events, passions, and sentiments of the present day than to those of three thousand years ago.

*Troilus and Cressida*, being a parody of the Homeric heroes, who, however elevated by a contempt of death and love of glory, are mere gladiators, priding themselves solely on their strength and ferocity, the play, with grave irony, assumes that physical superiority displayed and glory won in battle are the supreme good and aim of life. Greeks and Trojans meet during the truce and vie with each other in courtesy; yet the pleasures of hospitality are pronounced insipid compared with the rapture of strife. Hector and Nestor exchange the warmest and friendliest greetings; coupled, however, with regrets that the great age of the latter deprives them both of the gratification of seeking each other's life in deadly combat.

In like manner are the hollow courtesies of chivalry ridiculed and the inhumanity that lurks in martial glory exposed in the meeting of Æneas and Diomed.

“*Æneas.*                    *In humane gentleness*  
*Welcome to Troy ! now by Anchises' life*  
*Welcome indeed ! By Venus' hand I swear*  
*No man alive can love in such a sort*  
*The thing he means to kill more excellently.*  
*Dio. We sympathize. Jove ; let Æneas live*  
*A thousand complete courses of the sun*  
*If to my sword his fate be not the glory !*  
*But in mine emulous honour let him die*  
*With every joint a wound ; and that to-morrow.”*

Thus the notions of friendliness and hospitality are forced into farcical combination with those of enmity and inhumanity.

An excellent instance of the judgments formed according to the false ideal, which is ironically taken as the true standard, is furnished by the dispute between Pandarus and Cressida with reference to the comparative merits of Troilus and Hector. It will be perceived that the rule which they both use to estimate whether



the one or the other is "*the better man*," makes no reference to the moral or higher qualities of man's nature.

"*Pandarus*. He'll lay about him to-day, I can tell them that : and there is Troilus will not come far behind him ; let them take heed of Troilus : I can tell them that, too.

*Cressida*. What, is he angry too ?

*Pan*. Who, Troilus ? *Troilus is the better man of the two*.

*Cress*. O Jupiter ! there's *no comparison*.

*Pan*. What, not between Troilus and Hector ? Do you *know a man* if you see him ?

*Cress*. Ay ; if I ever saw him before, and knew him.

*Pan*. Well, I say, Troilus is Troilus.

*Cress*. Then you say as I say, for, I am sure, he is not Hector.

*Pan*. No, nor Hector is not Troilus, in *some degrees*.

*Cress*. 'Tis just to each of them ; he is himself.

*Pan*. Himself ? Alas, poor Troilus ! I would he were.

*Cress*. So he is.

*Pan*. — Condition, I had gone barefoot to India.

*Cress*. He is not Hector.

*Pan*. No, he is not himself. Would 'a were himself ! . . . No, Hector is *not a better man* than Troilus.

*Cress*. Excuse me.

*Pan*. He is *elder*.

*Cress*. Pardon me, pardon me.

*Pan*. The other's not come to 't ; you shall tell me another tale when the other's come to 't. Hector shall not have *his wit* this year.

*Cress*. He shall *not need it if he have his own*.

*Pan*. Nor *his qualities*.

*Cress*. *No matter*.

*Pan*. Nor *his beauty*.

*Cress*. 'T would not become him ; *his own's better*.

*Pan*. You have *no judgment*, niece. Helen herself swore the other day, that Troilus *for a brown favor* (for so 't is, I must confess) *not brown, neither —*

*Cress*. No, *but brown*.

*Pan*. Faith, to say truth, *brown and not brown*.

*Cress*. To say the truth, *true and not true*.

*Pan*. She *prais'd his complexion above Paris*.

*Cress*. Why, Paris hath *colour enough*.

*Pan*. So he has.

*Cress*. Then Troilus should *have too much* : if she *prais'd him above*, his complexion is *higher* than his ; he having *colour enough* and the *other higher*, is *flaming a praise for a good complexion*. . . .

*Pan*. Why, he is very young, and yet will he *within three pounds lift as much as his brother Hector*."

In order to illustrate the profound philosophical truths which he has wrapped up in this play, the poet puts prominently for-

ward the disorganization of the Grecian camp, — a feature which he borrows from the Iliad. Of system or degree, that is, of a whole made up of parts in graduated ranks and held in unity by law, there is no better type than an army or host of warriors, confederated for a common purpose, organized into one corps and subjected to one head, by whose rule and intelligence the whole body is governed. By such unanimity, the highest degree of co-operation is secured. But even in war, which is the *ultima ratio regum*, in other words, the renouncement of all rationality and the assertion that truth and justice are necessarily on the side of the strong battalions, the rule of efficient action must be drawn from the reason. Discipline — which implies both precept and practice — is indispensable to success; wisdom in council must be united with skill in action, and he is the ablest captain whose plans most nearly prefigure the event and “organize victory.”

If in the ordinary pursuits of civil life emulation is everywhere apparent, particularly in the envy and detraction that follow on the heels of excellence, there is still wider scope for its activity in the opportunities that war affords for the display of personal superiority. But distinction in battle begets vainglory, which, deriding policy and overvaluing mere force, arrogates undue importance of the individual with respect to the system and of the irrational with respect to the rational faculties. The two leading heroes, Achilles, “the bulk,” and Ajax, “the lubber,” are portrayed as huge bovine men, but little more rational than “draught oxen,” whom, as Thersites says, the craftier Nestor and Ulysses “yoke together and make plough up the war.” Their overweening pride and arrogance rest simply on their ability “to pun each other to shivers with their fists as a sailor breaks a biscuit.” These men

“Count wisdom as no member of the war,  
Forestall prescience, and esteem no act  
But that of hand.”

In this dramatic satire, therefore, the Grecian camp is represented as disorganized by the withdrawal of Achilles from the contest, not, as in Homer, from motives of resentment, but from a spirit of faction and insubordination, originating in arrogance and self-will, engendered and fed by the applause and renown won by personal prowess in battle. Such pride rests, of necessity,

on a superiority of physical and fighting qualities, of corporal parts, of bulk, muscle, and brute force; it is an exaltation of the animal over the rational, and this alone would justify the poet in a comic handling of the subject.

Of an organized army, the minds and wills of all the parts must be collected and concentrated in one head, which, as representative of the whole, is called "*the general*," as in the following lines, —

"'Fore all the Greekish heads, which with *one voice*  
Call Agamemnon head and general."

Ulysses, commenting upon the insubordination of Achilles and Ajax, ridicules the pride these animal men take in their rude strength, and portrays the effect of the predominance of faction over rule and system, — or *degree*, as it is termed in the play.

"Take but degree away, untune that string,  
And hark! what discord follows! each thing meets  
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters  
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,  
And make a sop of all this solid globe:  
Strength should be lord of imbecility,  
And the rude son should strike his father dead;  
*Force should be right; or rather right and wrong*  
(Between whose endless jar justice resides)  
Should lose their names, and so should justice, too."

With the supremacy of the animal nature might becomes right, and all organized system is impossible. The absurdity, therefore, of bestowing the highest honors of herodism upon those whose tendencies are to subvert all rule and order, and whose superiority is only in such qualities as most liken men to beasts, is patent.

Such appear to be the philosophical principles that underlie the plot in its broader scope; but how do they harmonize with or find representation in the characters and conduct of Troilus and Cressida, the two personages that give name to the piece? Such a title is a misnomer, unless these characters can be found to be based upon principles analogous, if not identical, with those so conspicuously illustrated in the factious disorganization of the Grecian camp. But the love story of Troilus and Cressida is in essence and idea illustrative of the same principles that underlie the political philosophy of Nestor and Ulysses.



Organization depends upon the *constancy* and *fidelity* of each part to the whole, and every disorganizing principle must involve *disloyalty* and *falsehood*. Now, Troilus and Cressida are types respectively of these principles; nay, more, their betrothment and mutual pledge of vows place them in the light of a wedded couple. Such a compact is one most strictly dependent upon the consent of each part, and its fidelity to a common bond. It is plain, therefore, that both in the union and the contrast between Troilus and Cressida, is found as well the principle on which organization depends as that by which it is destroyed.

These characters represent also respectively the ascendancy of the rational and of the animal side of human nature. Troilus's love is accompanied by a sense of duty, which gives strength to his vows and permanency to his attachment. Like all lovers, he idealizes the object of his passion, yet he unites with his fancy an unalterable truth, —

“Never did young man fancy  
With so *eternal* and so *fix'd* a soul.”

But the passion of Cressida is a thing of the eye, and changes with the objects of the eye. Her inconstancy is attributable to a predominance of animal impulse, and warmth of temperament over truth.

“Minds, sway'd by eyes, are full of turpitude.”

The characters of this comedy do not need any detailed analysis. They were furnished to the dramatist ready-made by Homer, and are so well known that had the dramatic copies made any very wide departure from their originals, they would be condemned at once for want of truth. They are all analyzed for us by the poet; that is, they analyze each other. But his aim, so far as the characters are simply dramatic, seems to have been to present the Homeric heroes in broad outline, and, at the same time, in broad caricature. To effect this, it was necessary to preserve the likeness; this he does, though with such modifications as suit his special purposes. They are unidealized, and have a thoroughly modern tone and air; they are modern men, stuffed out to heroic dimensions, and are somewhat cumbrous and unwieldy in their movements. They seem to have been purposely left vague in outline, in order to be in keeping with the tone of generality that pervades the piece, yet the likeness to their Homeric proto-

types is sufficient to give them a strong parodic effect by prompting a comparison between them and their epic originals. No doubt they would have some significance for a reader unacquainted with the *Iliad*, but such a reader would derive but comparatively little enjoyment from the play. How vague and general, for instance, is the delineation of Agamemnon! The name makes the character; we hear the name, and the mind reverts to the Homeric hero. He has but two speeches of any consequence, but in neither of these is there anything to individualize the character or show us the man. Our notions of what the character is meant to be are taken from our reminiscences of the Homeric "king of men," who suffers, however, in his translation a sad loss of dignity. The characters are logical abstracts; subjects with attributes or additions; wholes made up of parts. The air of vagueness that is thrown over them proceeds in a great measure from the numerous general reflections that are introduced into their discourse and dialogue. These abstract truths fit one mouth as well as another. Thus the comments of the "beef-witted" Achilles on the fickleness of Fortune and of the love that leans upon it, would be quite as characteristic had they fallen from the lips of the wise Ulysses or the experienced Nestor. So, too, with the character of Ulysses, who embodies "the wise man," or at least the politician's idea of "the wise man;" it is purely intellectual; he exhibits no emotion, and we see in him only a cool-headed politician and profound observer of mankind. Others of the characters are more sharply cut, particularly those which do not belong to Homer, as Troilus, Cressida, and Pandarus; still, these seem to be abstracts of character in which only the broader features are delineated, without much light and shade or complexity of detail.

From the foregoing analysis it appears that this comedy exhibits man in his relations to his *species* or Mankind, of which relations War is a violation. These relations, which are inherent in man's nature as a rational and social being, determine the rules of human intercourse, and a knowledge of these rules is moral and civil philosophy; the play is, consequently, a picture of War on a background of Philosophy, and at once suggests the antithesis of matter and mind, for war is carried on by material agencies and brute force, while philosophy deals with universals and abstractions, which exist only in the sphere of thought.

The relation of man to universal man can be regarded both



*so perspicuous nor true examples so apt.*" De Aug. Book II. ch. xiii.

The play-writer seems to have been familiar with this doctrine, for while securing the necessary background of philosophy and intellectuality on which to sketch his gross and animal heroes, he makes his incidents and dialogue examples of various branches of Learning, which, moreover, conform to the divisions and subdivisions of the sciences as laid down by Bacon in *De Augmentis*, in those chapters in which he treats of the Philosophy of Man; such incidents and characters being shaped also so as to exemplify the science of Rule (the fundamental idea of the piece) which when applied to man is moral and civil philosophy.

It may be observed, also, that the literary form on which this extraordinary piece of "parabolical poesy" is founded, and which is intimately, though ironically, blended with it, is the *epos*, of which the essential idea is to idealize physical heroism and recount wars between nations, thus bringing into view the human species and the worship of the heroic ideal; whereas the true "form" of man is the soul or reason, through which only is real greatness to be achieved. But the ideas of reason are unfolded by discipline, which proceeds from an instinctive desire for wisdom and knowledge, and is the origin of learning of all kinds; and this being the means of attaining true fame, occasions, according to the poet's usual method, the introduction of a large number of the various divisions and branches of science into the piece.

Bacon prefaces his consideration of the rational sciences with the following passage:—

"That part of human philosophy which regards Logic is less delightful to the taste and palate of most minds, and seems but a net of subtlety and spinosity. For as it is truly said that 'knowledge is the food of the mind,' so in their choice and appetite for this food most men are of the taste and stomach of the Israelites in the desert, that would fain have returned to the flesh-pots, and were weary of manna,—which, though it were celestial, yet seemed less nutritive and comfortable. And in like manner, those sciences are (for the most part) best liked which have some infusion of flesh and blood,—such as civil history, morality, policy,—about which men's affections, praises, fortunes turn and are occupied. But this same 'dry light' parches and offends most



men's soft and watery natures. But to speak truly of things as they are in worth, rational knowledges are the keys of all other arts." De Aug. Book V. ch. 1.

The remarks made in the foregoing passage upon the distasteful nature to most minds of logic, might, perhaps, be extended to morality and policy, although Bacon makes an exception in their favor; but morality and policy, when handled in the abstract, are to the general reader exceedingly unattractive, and, therefore, as this analysis is about to show, or attempt to show, how this "net of subtlety and spinosity" is put before our eyes in dramatic action, the above passage, with which even Bacon thought it worth while to prepare the mind of his reader, is quoted as a notice and a warning that what follows is necessarily taken up with the abstractions of logic and ethics; and, on this account, the examples cited will be those only which particularly refer to what is peculiar and original in Bacon's system. With respect to these, however, it may be premised that they will be found to be exemplified in the action and expounded in the dialogue of the piece with the greatest force and copiousness of thought and brilliancy of expression.

Of moral philosophy, which Bacon denominates the Culture or Georgics of the mind, there are, according to his division, four heads, viz. :—

1. The Exemplar of Good, — which may be considered with respect to Bacon's system the standard of moral health.

2. The character of the disposition, or the constitution of the patient.

3. The affections of the mind, or its diseases.

4. The remedies applicable.

But Bacon's own language must be quoted: "The doctrine of the use and objects of the faculties of the human soul has two parts, and those well known, and by general agreement admitted, namely, Logic and Ethic. . . . Logic discourses of the Understanding and Reason; Ethic of the Will, Appetite, and Affections." De Aug. Book V. ch. 1.

Ethic he divides into two principal parts, "the one of the Exemplar and platform of good, the other of the Regiment and Culture of the mind. The one describing *the nature of good*, the other prescribing *rules how to accommodate the will of man thereunto*." De Aug. Book VII. ch. 1.

The Exemplar or image of good in the supreme degree thereof is but that ideal of virtue and wisdom of which mention has been repeatedly made as the fundamental principle of the play, or rather as the standard, which exists in the mind of the reader, and is used by him in judging of the characters and morality of the play just as he would use the same in judging of men and their conduct in real life. In fact, it is the practical reason in its highest and purest state of discipline and development.

Bacon commends the ancients for their admirable discourses on the exemplar of Good, or "the forms of Virtue and Duty," but complains that they nowhere teach how these excellent ends are to be obtained.

"These writers," he says, "set forth good and fair copies, and accurate draughts and portraitures of good, virtue, duty, and felicity, as the true objects for the will and desires of man to aim at. But though the marks be excellent and well placed, how a man may best take his aim at them, that is, *by what method and course of education* the mind may be trained and put in order for the attainment of them, they *pass over altogether*, or slightly and unprofitably."

His own philosophy being altogether practical, and only valued so far as it was beneficial to man, he proceeds to explore the nature of good, and thus discourses:—

"But if the philosophers, before they had come to the popular and received notions of virtue and vice, pain and pleasure and the rest, had stayed a little longer upon the enquiry concerning the roots of good and evil and the strings of those roots, they had given, in my opinion, a great light to those questions which followed, and especially if they had consulted with *the nature of things* as well as moral axioms they had made their doctrines less prolix and more profound, *which being by them in part omitted and in part handled with much confusion*, I will briefly resume and endeavour to open and cleanse the fountains of morality before I come to the knowledge of *the culture of the mind which I set down as deficient*." De Aug. Book VII. ch. i.

He therefore intends to *set forth a doctrine original with himself*.

"There is formed and imprinted in every thing an appetite towards two natures of good; the one as every thing is a *total* or substantive in itself; the other, as it is a *part* or member of a



*greater body*; whereof the latter is in degree *the greater and worthier*, because it tends to the conservation of the *more general form*. The former of these may be termed '*Individual or Self-Good*,' the latter '*the good of Communion*.' . . . Thus it is ever the case (in nature) that the conservation of the more general form controls and keeps in order the lesser appetites and inclinations. This prerogative of the communion of good is much more engraven upon man, if he be not degenerate; according to that memorable speech of Pompey, who being in a commission of purveyance for a famine at Rome, and being dissuaded with great vehemency and instance by his friends about him that he should not hazard himself to sea in an extremity of weather, he said only to them, 'It is needful that I go, not that I live,' so that the love of life, which is the predominant feeling in the individual, did not outweigh affection and fidelity to the commonwealth." De Aug. Book VII.

And again, "Individual or Self-Good is divided into 'Good Active and Good Passive,' whereof the former, which is active, seems to be the stronger and more worthy . . . and in common life there is no man's spirit so soft and effeminate, but esteems *the effecting of somewhat he has fixed in his desire* more than any *pleasure or sensuality* . . . and it is no wonder that we earnestly pursue such things as are secured and exempted from the *injuries of time which are only our deeds and works*."

"There is also *another important præminence of the active good*, produced and upheld by that *affection which is inseparable from human nature, the love of novelty and variety*, which in the *pleasure of the sense* is *very confined* and can have no great latitude. . . . But in *enterprises, pursuits, and purposes of life*, there is much variety," etc. De Aug. Book VII. ch. ii.

According to these doctrines the good of the individual, or that which belongs to a thing, as "a total or substantive in itself," must be postponed to the good of the community; and even with respect to the individual, the good of *a life of action* is *greatly superior* to that of *the pleasures of the sense*, for the reasons given above, that "*deeds and works*" are exempt from "*the injuries of time*," and also because the pursuit of enterprises is accompanied by that "*affection, inseparable from human nature, the love of novelty and variety*."



Of these original doctrines of Bacon, the great speeches and main action of the play give us a living picture. For instance, the refusal of Achilles to take an active part for the Grecian cause, and his abandoning himself to the love of Polyxena, are flagrant violations of these precepts. No more forcible example can be adduced of the higher obligation that the individual owes to the community of which he is a member than the duty of a soldier to coöperate with and, if need be, sacrifice life and all for the good of the general body to which he belongs. But Achilles reverses this rule; he places his private inclinations above his duty to the public and breaks his honorable engagement with Hector to keep his dishonorable oath to Polyxena.

*"Fall, Greeks; fail, fame; honour or go or stay;  
My major vow lies here, this I'll obey."*

Wrapped in self-admiration he is "a total" in himself; he is his own ideal and knows no law but his own will.

*"Possess'd he is with greatness,  
And speaks not to himself, but with a pride  
That quarrels at self-breath."*

Like the Achilles of Horace he denies that he is subject to rules, —

*"Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat armis," —*

and refers all things to the arbitrament of force.

The lax discipline of the Grecian host rendering compulsory measures impracticable, Ulysses exerts all his wisdom and policy to win this sluggish and vain-glorious hero back to duty and action by purging his mind of self-idolatry and awakening his slumbering emulation. And in this process, as will be seen further on, a dramatic example is afforded of the practical application of Bacon's doctrine of the culture and amendment of the mind, — a branch of moral philosophy which Bacon asserts philosophers had previously to his time neglected, and which he was the first to expound (*vide* De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.).

Passing from the "general part touching the exemplar of good," Bacon proceeds to "the culture of the mind," without which part "the former seemeth to be no better than a fair image or statue, which is beautiful to contemplate but is without life or motion."

"Now in the culture of the mind and the cure for its diseases,

*three things* are to be considered ; *the different characters of dispositions, the affections, and the remedies* ; just as in the treatment of the body three things are observed ; the complexion or constitution of the sick man, the disease, and the medicines." De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.

"So, then, the first article of this knowledge is concerned with the *different characters of natures and dispositions*. And we are not here speaking," he says, "of the common inclinations either to virtues or vices, or to disorders and passions, but of those which are more profound and radical. And in truth I *cannot sometimes but wonder that this part of knowledge should for the most part be omitted both in Morality and Policy*, considering it might shed such a ray of light on both sciences." De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.

He then refers to the traditions of astrology ; also to the poets, "among whom are everywhere interspersed representations of characters" (for which, he might have added, Homer is especially distinguished) ; also to the wiser sort of historians, "for these writers having the images of the persons whom they have selected to describe constantly before their eyes hardly ever make mention of any of their actions without inserting something concerning their natures." Out of these materials he would have a full and careful treatise constructed, "not however," he adds, "that he would have these characters presented in ethics (as we find them in history or poetry or common discourse) in the shape of complete individual portraits, but rather *the several features and simple lineaments of which they are composed* and by the various combinations and arrangements of which all characters whatever are made up, that so we may have *a scientific and accurate dissection of minds and characters and the secret dispositions of particular men may be revealed*." De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.

This recommendation to draw up sketches of characters, in which only the more marked and radical features should be delineated, is not contained in The Advancement, but is one of the additions made in the *De Augmentis*, and Shakespeare consequently could not have been acquainted with Bacon's views on this point from any published work of his ; yet in the play are found some remarkable examples of just this portion of the doctrine of the cultivation of the mind, which Bacon claims "had



never been incorporated into moral philosophy, to which they principally appertain." For instance, Ulysses' portrait of Troilus is an epitome of "*the several features and simple lineaments*" as recommended by Bacon.

*Agam.* What Trojan is that same that looks so heavy ?

*Ulyss.* The youngest son of Priam, a true knight ;

*Not yet mature, yet matchless ; firm of word,*

*Speaking in deeds, and deedless in his tongue ;*

*Not soon provok'd, nor, being provok'd, soon calm'd ;*

*His heart and hand both open and both free ;*

*For what he has, he gives, what things he shows ;*

*Yet gives he not till judgment guide his bounty,*

*Nor dignifies an impure thought with breath :*

*Manly as Hector, but more dangerous ;*

*For Hector in his blaze of wrath, subscribes*

*To tender objects ; but he, in heat of action*

*Is more vindictive than jealous love !*

They call him Troilus," etc.

A similar summary of the more marked lineaments of the character is the picture of Ajax, drawn by Alexander : —

*Alex.* This man, lady, hath robb'd many beasts of their particular additions ; he is as *valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant* ; a man, into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his *valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion* : there is *no man hath a virtue he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attaint but he carries some stain of it* : he is *melancholy without cause and merry against the hair* : he hath the joints of every thing, but every thing so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use ; or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight."

Other examples might be quoted. The whole business of Thersites is to dissect the characters of those around him. He hits off their leading traits in a most masterly and compendious way.

"Next in order is the knowledge touching the affections and perturbations which are the diseases of the mind."

And here, again, Bacon refers to the poets and historians as "the best doctors of this knowledge, where we may find painted forth with great life how affections are kindled and excited" [as the vanity of Ajax is made to swell under the flattery of Ulysses (Act II. Sc. 3), or the love of Troilus is excited by Pandar's praise of Cressida (Act I. Sc. 1)], "and how pacified and restrained" [as the jealous rage of Troilus is restrained by the admonitions of Ulysses].



"I will not be myself, nor have cognition  
Of what I feel ; I am all patience."

Act V. Sc. 2].

"And how contained from act and further degree" [as Æneas checks the patriotic pride that leads him to extol his countrymen.

"But peace, Æneas,  
Peace, Trojan ; lay thy finger on thy lips"].

"And how they disclose themselves though repressed and concealed" [as the haughty disposition of Diomed is disclosed by his gait, —

"He rises on the toe ; that spirit of his  
In aspiration lifts him from the earth," —

or as Cressida's true disposition, notwithstanding her dissimulation, is at once revealed to the gaze of Ulysses by "every joint and motion of her body"].

"How they work" [as in Thersites' description of the vainglory of Ajax: "He stalks up and down like a pea-cock, a stride and a stand," etc. (Act III. Sc. 3), or as in the ferment of doubt excited in the mind of Achilles by jealousy of Ajax, —

"My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirr'd,  
And I myself see not the bottom of it."]

"How they vary" [as in the constancy of Cressida]. "How they are inwrapped one within another" [as love and jealous fear and diffidence of his own merit and distrust of novelty and temptation, and a presentiment of approaching calamity all mingle in the sadness that weighs so heavily on Troilus at parting from Cressida (Act IV. Sc. 4)].

"How they fight and encounter one with another" [on which particular Ulysses relies for the reformation of Achilles] "And many other particularities of this kind [of which instances can easily be found in the play] "amongst which this is of special use in moral and civil matters, how, I say, to set affection against affection and use the aid of one to master another, like hunters and fowlers, who use to hunt beast with beast and bird with bird. . . . For as in governments of states, it is sometimes necessary to bridle one faction with another" (as Ulysses sets up the faction of Ajax against that of Achilles), "so it is in the internal government of the mind."

Having thus discoursed of the divers "*complexions and constitutions*," and, secondly, of "*the diseases*," Bacon next treats of "*the remedies*."

"Now come we to those points," he says, "which are within our own command and have operation on the mind to affect and influence the will and appetite, and so have great power in altering manners, wherein philosophers ought carefully and actively to have enquired of the strength and energy of *custom, habit, exercise, education, example, imitation, emulation, company, friendship, praise, reproof, exhortation, fame, laws, books, studies, and the like*. For *these are the things that rule in morals*; these the agents by which the mind is affected and disposed, and the ingredients of which are compounded the medicines, to preserve or recover the health of the mind, so far as it can be done by human remedies." De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.

To the above ingredients of mental medicines there may be added (although they are obviously included under the heads of *reproof, exhortation, "and the like"*), *ridicule, satire, derision*, the very aim of which is the reformation of the manners.

To the influence of *praise, fame, emulation, and exhortation*, and especially *example and imitation* upon the characters, the movement of the piece is owing. Like medicines of the body, which are potent to produce disease as well as to cure it, these "agents for affecting and disposing the mind" are effective for evil as well as for good. To *example, imitation, fame, and emulation* are attributable the factions of the Grecian leaders. In a council held by the Greeks, Ulysses thus discourses on the causes that produce the dissensions of the Grecian camp: —

"The great Achilles — whom *opinion crowns*  
The sinew and the forehead of our host,  
Having his ear full of his airy fame,  
Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent  
Lies mocking our designs. With him, Patroclus,  
Upon a lazy bed the livelong day  
Breaks scurril jests;  
And, with ridiculous and awkward action  
(Which, slanderer, he *imitation* calls)  
He pageants us."

Nestor, also, points out the influence of *imitation and example*:

"And in the *imitation of these twain*  
(Whom, as Ulysses says, *opinion crowns*

With an imperial voice) *many are infect.*  
*Ajax is grown self-will'd ; and bears his head*  
*In such a rein, in full as proud a place*  
*As broad Achilles ; keeps his tent like him ;*  
*Makes factious feasts ; rails on our state of war,*  
 Bold as an oracle ; and sets Thersites  
 (A slave, whose gall coins slanders like a mint)  
*To match us in comparisons with dirt ;*  
 To weaken and discredit our exposure,  
 How rank soever rounded in with danger."

And in the following, again, Ulysses ascribes the neglect of rule and the disorganization of the Grecian host to the effect of *example* : —

" And this *neglection of degree* it is  
 That *by a pace goes backward, in a purpose*  
*It hath to climb.* The General's disdain'd  
 By him one step below ; he, by the next ;  
 That next, by him beneath ; so every step  
*Exempl'd by the first pace that is sick*  
*Of his superior, grows to an envious fever*  
*Of pale and bloodless emulation ;*  
 And 't is this fever that keeps Troy on foot,  
 Not her own sinews."

Having thus seen the potency of "the medicines" which Bacon prescribes for the cure of "the diseases of the mind," we may revert to the example the play affords of their practical application in the case of Achilles. To cure his factious spirit, and arouse him from the inactivity into which pride in his own greatness throws him is the aim of Ulysses, whose practical wisdom and knowledge of the world render him, if not an embodiment of the Exemplar of Good or "wise man" of the stoics — at least, a type of the political philosopher and teacher of men, or, as one of the most elegant of Shakespearian critics<sup>1</sup> has felicitously termed him, "the great didactic organ of the piece"; and the challenge of Hector to the Greeks affords him an opportunity of putting a plan for this purpose into execution. He thus imparts his design to Nestor, —

" *Ulysses.* Nestor —

*Nest.* What says Ulysses ?

*Ulyss.* I have a young conception in my brain,  
 Be you my time to bring it to some shape."

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Gulian C. Verplanck.



[For a comment on these lines see Bacon's explanation of the parable of Metis in his Essay on Counsel.]

*Nest.* What is 't?

*Ulyss.* This challenge that the gallant Hector sends,  
However it is spread in general name,  
Relates in purpose only to Achilles.

. . . Do not consent

That ever Hector and Achilles meet ;

. . . Make a lottery,

And by device let blockish Ajax draw  
The sort to fight with Hector : among ourselves  
Give him allowance as the better man,  
For that will physic the great Myrmidon,  
Who broils in loud applause, and make him fall  
His crest, that prouder than blue Iris bends.  
If the dull, brainless Ajax come safe off,  
We'll dress him up in voices : if he fail,  
Yet go we under our opinion still  
That we have better men. But, hit or miss,  
Our project's life this shape of sense assumes,  
Ajax employ'd plucks down Achilles' plumes.

*Nest.* Now, Ulysses, I begin to relish thy advice.

*Two curs shall tame each other ; pride alone*

*Must tarre the mastiffs on, as 't were their bone."*

In this Ulysses acts clearly on the Baconian doctrine of setting affection against affection, and of bridling one faction with another.

In pursuance of his plan, Ulysses works upon the mind of Achilles by alarming his pride lest the Greeks set up Ajax for their idol instead of himself. But first he advises Agamemnon and the rest to affect a neglect of Achilles : —

*"Ulyss.* Achilles stands i' the entrance of his tent ;  
Please it our General to pass strangely by him,  
As if he was forgot ; and, Princes all,  
Lay negligent and loose regard upon him.  
I will come last ; 't is like he'll question me  
Why such unplausive eyes are bent, are turn'd on him ;  
If so, I have derision medicinable  
To use between your strangeness and his pride,  
Which his own will shall have desire to drink,  
It may do good : pride hath no other glass  
To shew itself but pride ; for supple knees  
Feed arrogance and are the proud man's fees."

Then follows that eloquent "*exhortation*" to action, in which Ulysses administers large doses of the Baconian medicines, artfully mingling "*praise*" and "*reproof*," and arousing Achilles' "*emulation*" and "*love of fame*" by holding up the "*example*" of Ajax, who was likely to become renowned and the favorite of the Greeks by doing that which Achilles ought himself to do.

*Ulyss.* "Now shall we see to-morrow  
An act that very chance doth throw upon him,  
*Ajax* renown'd. O Heavens, what some men do  
While some men leave to do !  
How some men creep in skittish Fortune's hall  
Whiles others play the idiots in her eyes !  
*To see these Grecian lords ! why, even already*  
*They clap the lubber, Ajax, on the shoulder,*  
*As if his foot were on brave Hector's breast*  
*And great Troy shrinking.*  
*Achilles.* I do believe it : for they pass'd by me  
As misers do by beggars ; neither gave to me  
Good word nor look. *What ! are my deeds forgot ?*  
*Ulyss.* Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back  
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,  
A great-siz'd monster of ingritudes :  
These scraps are *good deeds past ; which are devour'd*  
*As fast as they are made ; forgot as soon*  
*As done.* Perseverance, dear my lord,  
*Keeps honour bright : to have done is to hang*  
*Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail*  
*In monumental mockery.* Take the instant way ;  
For honour travels in a strait so narrow  
Where one but goes abreast : *keep then the path,*  
*For emulation hath a thousand sons*  
*That one by one pursue : if you give way*  
*Or hedge aside from the direct forth-right*  
*Like to an enter'd tide, they all rush by*  
*And leave you hindmost.*

Then what *they do in present,*  
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours."

Having thus alarmed Achilles' pride and appealed to his spirit of emulation, and having also touched upon the necessity of perseverance in "*deeds and works*," which only, according to Bacon in the passage already quoted, can prevent "*the injuries of time*," Ulysses further enforces his argument for "*the præminence of the active good*" over "*the pleasures of the sense*," that is, for

deeds and the fame of the hero over the love of Polyxena, with another Baconian doctrine ; warning Achilles of that "*affection inseparable from human nature, the love of novelty and variety*," which leads men to "*praise the present object*" and "*new-born gauds*," while they consign to oblivion the past, however meritorious.

"For time is like a fashionable host  
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,  
And with his arms outstretch'd, as he would fly,  
Grasps in the comer : Welcome ever smiles,  
And farewell goes out sighing. O let not virtue seek  
Remuneration for the thing it was ;  
For beauty, wit,  
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,  
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all  
To envious and calumniating time.  
One touch of nature"

[i. e. "the love of novelty, inseparable from human nature"]

"makes the whole world kin," —

[whence it follows]

"That all with one consent praise new-born gauds,  
Though they are made and moulded of things past,  
And give to dust that is a little gilt  
More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.  
The present eye praises the present object :  
Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,  
That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax ;  
Since things in motion sooner catch the eye  
Than what-not stirs : the cry went once on thee  
And still it might ; and yet it may again,  
If thou wouldst not entomb thyself alive  
And case thy reputation in thy tent,  
Whose glorious deeds, but in these fields of late  
Made emulous missions 'mongst the gods themselves,  
And drove great Mars to faction.  
Achilles. Of this my privacy  
I have strong reasons.  
Ulyss. But 'gainst your privacy  
The reasons are more potent and heroical."

[The good of the Grecian host to which you belong is a reason "more potent and heroical" against your privacy than the gratification of your love for Polyxena is for it.]



"T is known, Achilles, that you are in love  
With one of Priam's daughters."

But it must grieve young Pyrrhus, now at home,  
When *fame shall in our islands sound her trump*  
And all the Greekish girls shall tripping sing, —  
' *Great Hector's sister did Achilles win ;*  
*But our great Ajax bravely beat down him.*  
Farewell, my lord ; I as your lover speak :  
*The fool slides o'er the ice that you should break."*

This profound and persuasive homily, that puts forward with so much power the preëminence of a life of action, has its effect even on the sluggish, self-worshiping Achilles ; it both quickens and perturbs his mind, and he begins to suspect that his supremacy is endangered.

" *Achilles.* Shall Ajax fight with Hector ?  
*Patroclus.* Ay, and perhaps receive much honour by him.  
*Achil.* I see *my reputation is at stake ;*  
*My fame is shrewdly gor'd.*

My mind is troubled, *like a fountain stirr'd ;*  
And I myself see not the bottom of it."

That these teachings and efforts of Ulysses to arouse Achilles to duty by awakening his slumbering emulation most pointedly exemplify the entirely novel and peculiar doctrines of moral philosophy as laid down in the *De Augmentis* is too obvious to need a word of comment. The same doctrine was also put forward by Bacon in a letter to Sir Henry Savill on the "Help of the Intellectual Powers" (not published until 1657 though written between 1596 and 1609), a portion of which it may be worth while to quote here, so perfect is the parallel between the philosophical doctrine and the poetic exemplification.

"And as to the will of man, it is that which is most maniable and obedient ; as that which admitteth most *medicines to cure and alter it.*"

And after enumerating several of these, he closes, as follows :  
'And the fourth is, where *one affection is healed and corrected, by another ;* as when cowardice is remedied by shame and dishonor, or *sluggishness and backwardness* by indignation and *emulation* and so of the like." Works, Vol. XIII. p. 300.

But it is not only Bacon's moral doctrines, of which the play

gives apposite examples ; his philosophy of civil life receives exposition also.

Civil knowledge he divides into three parts, Conversation, Negotiation, and Government.

With regard to Government, he says, "It is a part of knowledge *secret* and *retired* in both these respects in which things are deemed secret ; for some things are secret because they are *hard to know* and some because *they are not fit to utter*. We see all governments are *obscure* and *invisible*.

"But contrariwise in the governors towards the governed, all things ought, so far as the frailty of man permitteth, to be *manifest* and *revealed*. For so it is expressed in the Scriptures touching the government of God, that this globe which seemeth to us a dark and shady body, *is in the view of God* as chrystal. So unto princes and states, the natures and dispositions of the people, their conditions and necessities, their factions and combinations, their animosities and discontents ought to be, in regard to the *variety of their intelligences, the wisdom of their observations and the height of the station where they keep sentinel, in great part clear and transparent*. Wherefore considering that I write to a king that is master of this science, I think it decent to pass over this part in silence." Advancement, Works, Vol. VI. p. 388.

The spirit of this passage has its poetic counterpart in the following lines, in which are set forth the ubiquity and intelligence of the State as well as the secrecy with which its affairs are administered.

"Ulysses. 'Tis known, Achilles, that you are in love  
With one of Priam's daughters.

Achilles.

Ha ! known ?

Ulyss. Is that a wonder ?

The providence that 's in a watchful state  
Knows almost every grain of Plutus' gold ;  
Finds bottom in the uncomprehensive deeps ;  
Keeps place with thought, and, almost like the gods,  
Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.  
There is a mystery (with whom RELATION  
DURST NEVER MEDDLE) in the soul of state ;  
Which hath an operation more divine  
Than breath or pen can give expressure to.

All the commerce that you have had with Troy  
As perfectly is ours, as yours, my lord," etc.

The two passages are evidently the same in scope, thought, and sentiment.

Of *conversation*, which term Bacon uses in its largest sense of intercourse, behavior, conduct, including the government of the countenance, of the speech, gesture, and carriage of the body, he remarks, "The wisdom of conversation ought certainly not to be overmuch affected, but much less despised. . . .

"All grace and dignity of behavior may be summed up in the even balancing of our own dignity and that of others, as has been well expressed by Livy in that description which he gives of personal character. Lest I should appear (says he) either *arrogant* or *servile*, whereof the one were to forget the liberty of others, the other to forget my own." De Aug. Book VIII. ch. i.

Of this true rule of mingled deference and dignity Æneas gives an example — in the large style of the piece — in his delivery of Hector's challenge to Agamemnon, his manner being so modest and reverent as to lead the Grecian commander to insinuate that the Trojans were over-ceremonious as courtiers, to which Æneas replies with great spirit that though courtiers in peace, in war they were soldiers and had no superiors in manhood.

“ Æneas.	Is this
Great Agamemnon's tent, I pray ?	
Agam.	Even this.
Æneas.	May one, that is a herald and a prince,
	Do a fair message to his kingly ears ?
Agam.	With surety stronger than Achilles' arm
	'Fore all the Greekish heads, which with one voice
	Call Agamemnon head and general.
Æneas.	Fair leave and large security. How may
	A stranger to those <i>most imperial looks</i>
	Know them from eyes of other mortals ?
Agam.	How ?
Æneas.	Ay,
	I ask, that I might waken reverence
	And bid the cheek be ready with a blush
	Modest as morning when she coldly eyes
	The youthful Phœbus.
	Which is that god in office, guiding men ?
	Which is the high and mighty Agamemnon ?
Agam.	This Trojan scorns us ; or the men of Troy



“Why, then, you Princes,  
Do you with cheeks abash’d behold our works  
And think them shames, which are indeed naught else  
But the *protractive trials of great Jove*  
To find persistent constancy in men?” —

And then adds, with a figure drawn from the testing of metals, —

“The fineness of which metal is not found  
In Fortune’s love ; for then the *bold and coward*,  
The *wise and fool*, the *artist and unread*,  
The *hard and soft* are all *affin’d and kin*.”

This grouping of men of the most opposite natures — bold, coward, wise, fool, hard, soft, etc. — in one class is a clear case of hasty generalization, of *flying from particulars to an abstract and useless generality* ; but this is followed by a passage, in which, under the familiar figure of winnowing, the true method of induction by exclusions and rejections is stated : —

“But in the wind and tempest of her frown,  
*Distinction*, with a broad and powerful fan,  
*Puffing at all, winnows the light away* ;  
And *what hath mass or matter, by itself*  
*Lies rich in virtue and unmingled*.”

Compare this with Aphorism 16, Book II., of *Novum Organum* : —

“We must make a *complete separation* of nature. . . . Then, indeed, after the rejection and exclusion has been duly made, there *will remain at bottom all light opinions vanishing into smoke*, a form affirmative, *solid and true and well defined*.”

The other branch of the Inductive Method, called by Bacon Learned Experience, is also introduced. What he means by “Learned Experience” Bacon explains in the *De Augmentis*. “As a man may proceed in his path in three ways, — he may grope his way in the dark for himself ; he may be led by the hand of another, without himself seeing anything ; or, lastly, he may get a light, and so direct his steps : in like manner when a man tries all kinds of experiments, *without order or method*, this is but groping in the dark, but when he uses *some direction or order in experimenting*, it is as if he were led by the hand, and this is what I mean by Learned Experience.” The Light, he adds, is the New Organ.

Learned Experience, then, is to make trials and experiments

with some aim and preconception of the result. Some degree of theory, however conjectural, must guide the experiment. This is put in the play by Agamemnon, with regard to the enterprises of the Greeks that had not met their expectations.

“Nor, princes, is it matter new to us  
That we come short of our suppose so far  
That after ten years’ siege yet Troy walls stand ;  
Sith *every action* that hath gone before  
Whereof we have record, *trial* did draw  
*Bias* and *thwart*, not *answering the aim*,  
And *that unbodied figure of the thought*  
That gave it surmised shape.”

These last three quotations, which reflect the fundamental rules of Bacon’s Method, form one continuous speech, which is put into the mouth of Agamemnon, who in this parable stands for “rule.” Act I. Sc. 3.

Whatever may have been the poet’s design in writing this speech, and in whatever way its intimate coincidence with Bacon’s tenets may be explained, it certainly without any forced construction may be taken as a poetical statement of cardinal principles of the Inductive Logic. That the play should contain dramatic examples of Bacon’s peculiar doctrines of Moral Philosophy, including the “Georgics of the mind” as a branch of that science, and also of various novel points in his Civil Philosophy is not difficult to account for, for they are set forth in *The Advancement*, which was published in 1605, and there seems to be good ground for supposing that the dramatist was familiar with it. In *The Advancement* Bacon quotes from Aristotle’s *Ethics* that “young men are no fit auditors of moral philosophy,” and Mr. Spedding, in his edition of Bacon’s Works, points out that this is a misquotation ; that Aristotle speaks only of political philosophy, and that the play has followed Bacon in his error, for in it we find the lines : —

“Not much  
Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought  
Unfit to hear *moral* philosophy.”

This certainly indicates that the poet, instead of going to the original, took the quotation from Bacon, a supposition which is greatly strengthened by the striking similarity which is obvious in the context of both writers. It is perhaps also worth noting

that both in *The Advancement* and the play there is found a proverb originally taken from the "Sentences" of Publius Syrus, "*Amare et sapere vix Deo conceditur.*" In *The Advancement* (Vol. VI. p. 181, Bacon's Works), this inability "to love and be wise" is transferred from the Gods to men. "It is not granted to *man* to love and be wise;" and the play (Act III. Sc. 2) follows Bacon's alteration:—

"For to be wise and love  
Exceeds *man's might.*"<sup>1</sup>

But there are other parallelisms between the play and *The Advancement*, which, though resting on less obvious analogies, strongly point to the playwright's acquaintance with Bacon's work. The allusion to Aristotle is found in that part of *The Advancement* wherein Bacon treats of moral philosophy and the culture of the mind as a branch of that science; and in the particular paragraph which contains the quotation, he is handling the subject of "*books and studies and what influence and operation they have upon manners,*" and he asks: "Did not one of the fathers, in great indignation, call Poesy *vinum dæmonum* because it increaseth temptations, perturbations, and vain opinions?" Now *Troilus and Cressida* is a satire upon the most famous and influential book of poetry ever written, the study of which forms a necessary part of a liberal education, and the ridicule is aimed at the "vain opinions" and false ideals engendered by it, such as admiration of the heroism of the battlefield and a love of war and military glory. It is idle to say that at this day the Homeric poem can have no influence; it was the foundation of Grecian literature and civilization, and so long as a love of Greek culture shall last, Homer will awaken enthusiastic admiration, and who shall estimate the influence of this upon the mind of the world? More philosophical surely is the opinion of the eloquent Foster that "the spirit of Homer will vanquish as irresistibly as his Achilles vanquished. . . . And who can tell how much that passion for war, which from the universality of its prevalence might seem inseparable from the nature of man, may have been in the civilized world reinforced by the enthusiastic admiration with which young men have read Homer and similar poets, whose genius transforms what is, and ought always to appear, purely

<sup>1</sup> The same saw occurs in Bacon's *Essay, Of Love*, first published in 1612.



horrid to an aspect of grandeur? . . . Whatever is the chief and grand impression made by the whole work on the ardent minds which are the most susceptible of the influence of poetry, *that* shows the real moral; and Alexander and Charles XII., through the medium of 'Macedonia's madman,' correctly received the genuine inspiration."

But not to dwell on this point, which has reference to the whole scope and design of the play rather than to the mode of handling the subject in particular scenes, it is tolerably evident that the dramatist was acquainted with Bacon's book; and if in writing a play in which he intended to hold up Learning and Philosophy, or, in other words, man's reason and intellect, instead of his animal bulk and sinew, as that on which his greatness depends, he found much in that treatise on Learning that suited his purpose, and consequently condensed a large measure of the book into his comedy, it is a fact that perhaps need not surprise us; but it is a remarkable and significant fact that in this same play, which reflects so much of Bacon's mind, passages should be introduced that may fairly be construed as pointed, though of course figurative, illustrations of the most characteristic features of Bacon's Inductive Method, — a method which, though the philosopher was much engaged upon at the time this play was written, he did not give to the world for some twelve years afterward.

But does not this play, which inculcates the science of rule when taken, not merely in detached passages, but in its whole drift and scope, and which has lying at its bottom the reason or rule of rules, reflect the spirit of the Baconian philosophy; for this philosophy is also a science of rule or *art of direction*, and is so termed by Bacon?

"And this is the very thing," he says, "which I am preparing and labouring at with all my might, — to make the mind of man by help of art a match for the nature of things; to discover an *Art of Indication and Direction*, whereby all other arts with their axioms may be detected and brought to light." De Aug. Book V. ch. ii.

The Inductive Logic, then, is an Art of Direction or science of rule, and that which in the *Novum Organum* Bacon calls the discovery of a form, in his earlier writings is termed "the freeing a direction." By this process, which is but a counterpart of that

more elaborately set forth in the *Novum Organum* for the discovery of a form, each instance in which a given nature or effect is produced, is regarded as a rule for its artificial production. But as the same effect may be produced by many different means, and be found in many heterogeneous substances, — redness, for instance, which may be found in the rose, the ruby, the rainbow, and numberless other things and appearances — the essential cause remaining the same in all, the direction is not made sufficiently free, that is, comprehensive, until after an examination of numerous different instances, and the exclusion of all unessential circumstances, it embodies in its formula a statement of the one essential cause or law which underlies the production of the effect in each particular instance. To lay down such a direction is equivalent to the discovery of the form; and, on the other hand the discovery and definition of the form constitutes a direction or rule of practice.

Now what in Natural Philosophy is the investigation of the forms of physical natures, and the framing of practical directions, is, in *Troilus and Cressida*, transferred to Moral Philosophy, the province of which is the investigation of the *form of human nature*, which form is, preëminently, a rule of practice, since it is the soul or reason, which, in its complete development of virtue and wisdom, is that exemplar or ideal of good or model of perfect Humanity that is the Supreme Rule of human practice.

The other subdivision of The Art of Invention, that is, the Invention of Arguments (which technically is called “Topics”), may be taken, together with the Art of Judging by Syllogism (which is the ordinary logic), inasmuch as the invention of arguments cannot be well exemplified in a play, except by the application of such arguments to some subject in the dialogue. The debate in council before Priam (Act II. Sc. 2) is a regular piece of dialectic, in which the reasoning turns upon the *proper use of reason*, while the arguments *pro* and *con* for the delivery of Helen to the Greeks are drawn from the topics of “eligibility” and “the better.” *Vide* Aris. Org. Top. Book III. ch. i.

The question which arises among the personages of the play, and which, in one form or another, forms the subject matter of almost every dialogue, is the comparative merit of persons, and their respective claims to superiority. The vain-glorious vaunting in which they all indulge, as well as the depreciation of their



rivals, from which none of them are free, necessarily involves judgments on this point. Sometimes the question is treated argumentatively, as in the answer of Diomed to Paris's inquiry whether he or Menelaus were the better deserving of Helen (Act IV. Sc. 1). Another conspicuous instance is the judgment which Ulysses passes upon the comparative merits of Ajax and Achilles. Act II. Sc. 3.

And so comprehensively miscellaneous is this drama that this question of relative superiority is brought also to the *test of experiment*, as in the trial by combat between Ajax and Hector.

But the play is more profoundly illustrative of logic than it can be made by the mere introduction of logical technicalities. The Logic of the Schools is nothing more than the reduction to scientific method of the mental processes in deductive reasoning made necessary by the laws of the mind. These processes, when stripped of technical details, are very simple.

"All the aims of human reason," says an able logician, "may in the general be reduced to these two: 1. To rank things under those universal ideas to which they truly belong; and, 2. To ascribe to them their several attributes and properties in consequence of that distribution."

The first step, then, in Logic is the creation of universal ideas. This is done by the compositive and divisive process of the mind, which is a part of its mechanism, and of which Bacon speaks in his general division of the sciences as the foundation of Philosophy.

"Philosophy," he says, "discards individuals; neither does it deal with the impressions immediately received from them, but with *abstract notions* derived from these impressions; in the *composition and division* whereof, according to the law of nature and fact, its business lies. And this is the *office and work of Reason*." De Aug. Book II. ch. i.

The mind, therefore, by its natural action, separates its notions of things by their differences and compounds them by their common attributes, and thus forms species and genera, or classes, to which it gives names. These names, consequently, are general terms and are significant of abstract or universal ideas: they are the "organs" of discourse.

To give any object the name of a class, which is, of course, a general term, is to rank it under the universal idea which the



term signifies, a process, which all men, however ignorant of logic, are constantly and necessarily performing, for almost all the language of daily life is made up of general terms. This is particularly noticeable in the abusive or derisive "calling of names," by which individuals are assigned to classes characterized by odious or contemptible properties. With this species of logic the play abounds, and examples need not be cited. *Vide* Act V. Sc. 1.

On the other hand, when distinction is conferred upon an object, *singular* terms are created, which are applicable only to individuals and which also form their additions or titles. An instance of this occurs in the passage in which Achilles arrogantly boasts that he will slay Hector in some particular part of his body that he may commemorate the wound by a name: —

"Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body  
Shall I destroy him? whether there, or there, or there?  
That I may give the local wound a name  
And make distinct the very breach whereout  
Hector's great spirit flew."

Now, as the play represents Man in relation to the *species*, the common attribute of which is the reason, whose ordinary office and work it is to compound and separate and so classify all phenomena, these notions of *composition* and *division* are fundamental ones in the piece, and constantly recur in the characters, incidents, diction, tropes, and witticisms. Of these, examples will be given when the rhetoric of the piece is touched upon; but first some note must be taken of the *Art of Transmission*.

Of this Art, the third branch is the Illustration and Adornment of Speech. This pertains to Rhetoric, of which Bacon thus speaks: —

"Rhetoric is subservient to the imagination as Logic is to the understanding; and the duty and office of rhetoric, if it be deeply looked into, is no other than to apply and recommend the dictates of reason to imagination, in order to excite the appetite and will," and again, he says, "the end of rhetoric is to fill the imagination with observations and images to second reason."

Rhetoric contributes its aid by arraying the truth which reason commends for acceptance in similes and ornaments of speech. Of this there is an example in the speech of Nestor, in which he takes up the thought just previously let fall by Agamemnon that Adversity is the true test of manhood, and expands it into a speech made up wholly of illustrative trope and comparison: —

“With due observance of thy godly seat,  
Great Agamemnon, *Nestor shall apply*  
*Thy latest words. In the reproof of chance*  
*Lies the true proof of men.”*

Such is the text which Nestor thus translates into figure and similitude : —

“The sea being smooth  
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail  
Upon her patient breast, making their way  
With those of nobler bulk ?  
But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage  
The gentle Thetis, and anon behold  
The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut,  
Bounding between the two moist elements,  
Like Perseus' horse : where's then the saucy boat  
Whose weak untimber'd sides but even now  
Co-rivall'd greatness ? either to harbour fled,  
Or made a toast for Neptune. Even so  
Doth valour's show and valour's worth divide  
In storms of fortune ; for in her ray and brightness  
The herd hath more annoyance by the brize  
Than by the tiger ; but when the splitting wind  
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,  
And flies fled under shade, why, then, the thing of courage  
As rous'd with rage, with rage doth sympathize,  
And with an accent tun'd in self-same key  
Retorts to chiding fortune.”

Thus a thought contained in one line, or two half lines, is rhetorically expanded into twenty lines and upwards of illustration and ornament.

In the Art of Rhetoric, Bacon reports certain deficiencies, one of which is the want of a collection of “the popular colours of good and evil” (which are the Sophisms of Rhetoric), with their elenches or refutations annexed ; and he gives by way of example the following : —

“*Sophism.* That which people praise is good, that which they blame is bad.

“*Elenche.* He praises his wares, who wants to get them off his hands.

“It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer ; but when he is gone he will vaunt.”

Both branches of this refutation are found in the play, in Paris's reply to Diomed's contemptuous estimate of Helen.

ness, steadiness to falling, union to discord, elevation to descent. Take the very opening lines.

“ The Greek *are strong* and *skilful* to *their strength* ;  
Fierce to *their skill*, and to *their fierceness valiant*.”

Here strength is superadded to strength. Then follow weakness, detraction, and despondency.

“ But I am *weaker* than a woman’s tear,  
Tamer than sleep, *fonder* than ignorance,  
Less *valiant* than the virgin in the night  
And *skil-less* as unpractis’d infancy.”

The effect of anti-climax and of all diminishing series is an unsatisfactory one. But the theme of the play is the *destruction* of *system* and *unity*, the factious disorganization of the Grecian camp ; it is a picture of disorder and the overthrow of rule ; and it is quite possible that the dramatist, whose genius was of the boldest and most innovating character, designedly left the picture without æsthetic totality in order to enhance the effect and deepen the impression made by the portrayal of principles which are the source of all imbecility.



## AS YOU LIKE IT.

A WANT of invention has often been charged upon Shakespeare, because he goes for the fables of his plays to some old story or legend instead of quarrying the plot out of his own brain, but to whatever extent he is indebted to others for his materials, he uses them no otherwise than as the sculptor does the block out of which he carves his statue; the ideal that lies hidden within it and that he extricates from it is all his own; while his ingenuity as a constructive artist is manifest in his seizing upon some apparently unimportant feature of his original, by which he brings it within that class of writings that supplies him with "the form" of his piece.

Such is the case with *As You Like It*, the plot of which is taken from a novel by Thomas Lodge (itself founded probably on the Coke's Tale of Gamelyn) entitled "*Euphues' Golden Legacy*, bequeathed to Philautus' *sonnes nursed up with their father in England*." Of the incidents of this novel — which, so far as style is concerned, is a mass of frigid conceits — the dramatist freely availed himself, yet he so quickened these dead materials with a new "form" or soul that his work is as fresh and original as if wholly his own creation.

"A legacy" is a free gift made by *will* and is a token of love. It springs from good will or benevolence (*benevolens*), — and therefore may be considered as a type of all gifts and services proceeding from love and favor. But the greatest and most desirable gift that can be made is knowledge, and in *Euphues'* case his legacy is entirely educational, consisting only of a *book*, which enjoins upon Philautus to breed well his sons, — "bend them," it says, "in their youth like the willow least thou bewail them in their age for their wilfulness." The story thus bequeathed to work these good effects is entitled "*Rosalynd*," and opens with an account of a famous knight of Malta, John of Bourdeaux, "whom *Fortune had graced* with many favors and *Nature honoured* with sundry exquisite qualities, so beautified with the excellence of both

as it was a question whether *Fortune* or *Nature* were more *prodigal in deciphering the riches of their bounties*."

This valiant knight also makes "a legacy," in which, after disposing of his plough-lands among his children, he bestows upon them a large estate of moral precepts far more valuable than gold, for, as he says, "wisdom is better than wealth, and a golden sentence is worth a world of treasure;" and of these precious sayings the one most emphatically expressed and dwelt upon is, perhaps, the injunction to observe "the *golden mean*." "Take heed, my sonnes, the mean is sweetest melodie. . . . Be valiant, my sonnes, but not too rash, for that is extreme. Fortitude is the mean."

Such is the character of Euphues' legacy; it is distinctly educational.

A will is a devise,<sup>1</sup> so called because it *divides* and makes disposition of an estate, allotting parts and shares to different individuals at the pleasure of the testator. In analogy with the portions given by a will, the play regards the dispositions of men (as was <sup>e</sup>scribed in the instance of John of Bordeaux) as made up of <sup>ner</sup>in gifts and properties of body and mind, which constitute their allotment of human nature; or, in Bacon's language, "of the *spirit of man* according as it is meted out to different individuals." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 42.

But *devise* and *device* are the same word in different significations, both primarily signifying a *division*. A device was an emblem with an appropriate motto, having some moral significance, inscribed upon a shield or banner, or worn as the livery of a chieftain to distinguish him and his followers, and *divide* them from others. Afterwards *device* came to mean anything *devised* or *invented*, to which the verb *devise* corresponded in the sense of to *contrive*, *plan*, *forge*, *feign*, *counterfeit*, etc.; and hence, in the play, the characters are looked upon as *devised*. Orlando says of Rosalind: —

"Thus Rosalind of *many parts*  
By heavenly synod was *devised*,  
Of *many faces, eyes, and hearts*,  
To have the touches dearest prized;"

and if we recur again to the word *disposition* we find that it has the same signification, for, according to Richardson, "Disposition,

<sup>1</sup> Devise — *divisa*, L. Latin, from *dividere*. Howard's *Dict. de la Cont. de Noms*.



in Shakespeare, is collectively the whole *arrangement of parts, the frame.*" *Vide* Rich. Dict. in v.

The term *device* was also applied to a kind of stage plays, which, under emblematic forms, sought to convey some moral truth; and which, being pure inventions of the fancy, made but little attempt to preserve verisimilitude, and were, therefore, emphatically called *Devices* or *Inventions*. In them the poet gave free rein to his fancy, and gods and goddesses and emblematic characters and personifications of all kinds figured in them. They were mere devices of the brain; but as in the case of a devise or testament, of which the will of the testator is the only law, yet such will must act within the lines of the higher law and general policy of the community, so notwithstanding the fancy of the inventor is the only law of a device, it still is restrained by the general law of decorum and good taste, a continence of the fancy being as necessary when exercised artistically in a device as when exercised morally in the pursuit or indulgence of desire.

These plays, though mere jests and intended for pastime, had a serious side, and would have lost their emblematic character and been without meaning, had they not had a moral <sup>bly</sup> significance. According to "rare Ben," who wrote a considerable number of them, "they should be grounded on solid learning," and he adds that the rule should be observed "to suffer no object of delight to pass without his mixture of profit and example;" and this serious side may be seen in the titles of his own pieces, as "Pleasure reconciled to Virtue," "Love freed from Ignorance and Folly," and the like.

Devices or masques were also much in request at the nuptials of the heirs of great families, and Hymen was a stock character in them. Many songs were introduced, and they almost always ended with a dance, in which respects *As You Like It* observably conforms to them; and, indeed, *As You Like It* is a comedy which takes as its constructive principle the "form" or idea of a Device (which, whether the word is taken in the sense of a last will or of a stage play, is that a man's will and pleasure is his only law), and paints the world as a theatre and human life as a play — "all the world's a stage," says Jaques — in which every man acts his will and plays his part in the pursuit of his fancies. The dialogue is filled with invention in verse, argument, and jest, — invention itself being, at times, the topic of discourse. The char-



acters, especially Rosalind, are distinguished for inventiveness of mind; the business of the play is conversation, consisting of pleasantry and jests, and is carried on for purposes of mutual entertainment; all which features of the piece are rendered more effective by the learning and philosophy which form its substratum, as well as by the moralizing cast of the characters, who habitually find in natural facts striking emblems of human life.

It is apparent that "Euphues' Legacy," the title of the old novel, which is the source of the plot and which is necessarily connected with the notion of a *will* or *devise*, suggested to the play-writer a *device* as the artistic form of his play: and in like manner, the fact that *wills* and *devises* are a class of writings, the essential "form" of which is the *will* of the testator, seems clearly to have determined the moral scope of his piece; for it is a representation of a world, in which men's conduct is controlled, not by law, but by their own will and pleasure, or by those likings and dislikes which depend upon individual disposition, and with regard to which each one claims the right to consult his own taste and fancy. In this sphere, opinions upon the good and evil in men and women and the consequent desire or aversion they inspire are often far more dependent upon humor or caprice or even upon chance than upon judgment. Indeed, in such a world, the reason is but the handmaid of the will, whose office it is to devise excuses for the indulgence of every desire.

The conditions requisite for such a representation are found in the following circumstances. A Duke of France is driven into exile by an usurping brother, and in company with several loving lords who adhere to his broken fortunes takes refuge in the forest of Arden, where, like Robin Hood and his merry men, they support themselves by the chase. The fame of their sojourn there and of the free and happy lives they lead goes abroad, and many gentlemen flock thither every day "to fleet the time carelessly as they did in the *golden world*." The Duke has a daughter, Rosalind, who, at the time of his exile, is retained by the usurper at the court, as a companion for her cousin, Celia, between whom and Rosalind exists a love "dearer than the natural bonds of sisters," but in a sudden fit of caprice the usurper affects to consider her traitorous and banishes her from the court. In this strait of Fortune, Rosalind resolves to seek her father in Arden, and assuming for greater protection the male attire, and accom-

panied by Celia, and also by Touchstone, the court fool, — both of whom out of pure love and fidelity give up the court to share her adversity, — she reaches Arden and finds a safe retreat among the love-lorn swains and shepherdesses that inhabit a pastoral district upon the skirts of the forest. To Arden, too, is driven Orlando, a noble and valorous youth, who had been the victor in a wrestling match before the court, on which occasion he and Rosalind had met and, as hero and heroine should do, had fallen in love with each other at sight. Orlando had been obliged to fly from home to escape the contrivances against his life on the part of his elder brother, Oliver, who entertains for him a deadly, though causeless, hatred; and in company with an old and loyal serving man, is led, by chance, to that part of the forest where the Duke and his companions dwell. By this train of events, all the leading personages of the drama are brought together, and in the free and irresponsible life of the forest, each one has scope enough to indulge whatever tastes or humors are uppermost, however wayward or extravagant they may be. All the restraints of conventionalism are thrown off, and in Arden the forest branches do not wave more freely than they who dwell there speak their thoughts and give rein to their fancies. Society is resolved into its elements; all social and political and even domestic ties are dissolved; the company around the old Duke is held together by personal attachment alone, and each one makes the world according to his pleasure and previous education. It is that golden world<sup>1</sup> in which “man’s pleasure is his only law.”

Their social instincts, however, drive them to seek company and conversation, but since in the forest there is neither news nor affairs nor topics of the day, all pride and ambition being excluded, the whole dialogue springs from the invention of the speakers, and aims only at the amusement of the hour. It natu-

<sup>1</sup> There can hardly be a doubt that the author of *As You Like It* was acquainted with Tasso’s *Aminta*, which was published but a short time previous to the production of the comedy; and that both the spirit and mode of treatment as well as the title of the English play, were suggested by some lines in the famous chorus, “O bella età dell’ero” (O beautiful age of gold), which declare the law of the golden world, as follows: —

“ Ne fu sua dura legge [*i. e. d’onor*]  
 Nota a quell’alme in libertate avezze.  
 Ma legge aurea e felice  
 Che Natura scolpi. S’ei piace, ei lice,” —

*i. e.* your pleasure is your law, or *as you like it*.



rally falls into a vein of mutual criticism ; and though in Arden they are under no conventional restraints, they yet take thither their culture and breeding and recognize the obligations of civility. When Orlando, driven by famine, rushes in, sword in hand, upon the Ducal party and threatens with death any who shall touch the food until his necessities are answered, the Duke says :

“ Art thou thus boldened, man, by thy distress,  
Or else a *rude despiser of good manners*,  
That in civility thou seem'st so empty ?  
*Orl.* You touch'd my vein at first, the thorny point  
Of bare distress hath ta'en from me the shew  
Of smooth civility : yet am I inland bred  
And know some nurture.”

But, although good manners are transported to the desert, there is no observance there of mere ceremony or compliment ; no one is called upon to please or be pleased, further than may suit his inclination ; no one feels the necessity of either expressing or repressing any feeling or opinion for politeness' sake. It is an unmasking of Society, a discarding of mere form and affectation, and a falling back to natural manners and that law of reason which enjoins simply gentleness, sincerity, and good will. Of course, this causes frequent exposure of those secret inclinations or dislikes which are ordinarily covered by courtesy. Jaques, “ monsieur Melancholy,” and Orlando, “ signior Love,” encounter each other, and with scarce an attempt to preserve the forms of civility, express their mutual aversion, coupled with a desire that they may meet as little as possible and become better strangers. It is the collision of Satiety and Romance.

This Arden, this golden world or “ pleasant land of drowsy-head ” and indolence, with its preference of a life of nature over civilization, ironical as it is, does not seem to be wholly so. It is true that the dwellers there profess to think that an escape from the evils of society is more than a compensation for the loss of all its advantages, — a view which, in its extreme one-sidedness, must necessarily appear ironical ; but the dramatist does not seem designedly to hold up to ridicule the romance of the forest, but rather to set forth the power of knowledge and education to neutralize and baffle Adversity ; and to this end he seizes upon and embodies for the delight of his readers two natural and in themselves poetical sentiments, which, though temporary and tran-



sient in their nature, he yet renders permanent, so that they give the predominant tone to his ideal world ; one, that sense of relief with which, when weary of the world and its hollowness, we turn away for rest to Nature and her truth and realities ; the other, that romantic sympathy which, coupled with the tedium of the dull routine of commonplace life, renders so fascinating the tales of the wild and joyous life of the forest, like those of " Robin Hood and his merry men." The predominance of these sentiments spreads a charm over the whole play and informs life in Arden with all that is buoyant in forest freedom and delightful in forest meditation. The shade of melancholy boughs naturally inspires a pensive mood in minds of sensibility and culture — and in such minds only — and the brooks that brawl along the wood, and the huge stems of trees, on whose tops rest the weight of centuries, suggest how durable is nature, how fleeting is man, and give a turn to the thoughts that renders meditation doubly sweet by the undertone of sadness that mingles with it. So, too, the deep peace and seclusion of the forest bring to mind, by force of contrast, the cares and strife of life ; and to persons saddened by experience of the world, the enjoyment of the quietude and beauty of Nature is heightened by the reminiscences of the ingratitude and heartlessness of man. Thus the dwellers in Arden, far withdrawn from the duties and responsibilities of life, muse upon " violated vows " and broken friendships ; or they lightly carol songs, the burden of which is the emptiness of ambition, or they " lose and neglect the creeping hours of time " in idle contemplation of Time's rapid flight. This delightful carelessness and inconsistency, — a frame of mind induced by these subtile contrasts, and a state of feeling that has been described by a great student of Nature as

"That sweet mood when pleasant thoughts  
Bring sad thoughts to the mind" —

this it is that seems to impart the charm to this comedy, the perusal of which so fills us with the same happy unconcern for the ongoings of the world that it is like a real escape from the troubles of life, expanding our minds, freshening our hearts, and unbending our brows, as if in reality we wandered through the forest glades and released

" Our spirits amongst leaves from careful ake."

Yet this mode of life, however attractive in poetry or enjoyable as a recreation, does not in the long run comport with human nature, which is instinctively social; it is, therefore, an *impropriety*, that is, not *proper*, to the nature of man; and, consequently, to give relief to this picture of sylvan and pastoral life, which is virtually a step backward towards barbarism, the poet lays it upon a background of culture and education, as seen in the breeding and civility of the characters. But in order that the artistic structure of the piece and the harmony and significance of its parts may be better apprehended from the point of view here taken, it will be necessary briefly to set forth the main conceptions which seem to make up the scheme of the play.

In a dialogue between Touchstone and Corin (Act III. Sc. 2) the following passage occurs: —

“*Touch.* Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?”

*Cor.* No more, but that I know, the more one sickens the worse at ease he is; and he that wants money, means, and content is without three good friends: That the property of rain is to wet and fire to burn: That good pasture makes fat sheep; and that a great cause of the night is the lack of the sun: That he that hath learned no wit by nature nor art may complain of good breeding or comes of a very dull kindred.”

In this answer of Corin's, notwithstanding its tone of ridicule, he defines philosophy as a knowledge of the properties of things, and of the effects produced by such properties as causes. All things in the physical world, according to their natures or properties, bear relation to each other, and on these relations depend their modes of action. Such action, under like circumstances, is always uniform, for, as Corin sagely expounds the matter, fire will always burn, rain will always wet, and certain effects are sure to follow from certain causes. These relations and their uniformity of action and invariable sequences constitute the nature and truth of things, on which as first principles reason builds up human knowledge.

In the human world, if man possessed his original purity of will and illumination of intellect, he also would in all his actions conform to the relations he holds with men and things by reason of their various properties, but unfortunately he carries a discord within himself, his chief properties — the reason on the one hand and the desires and will on the other — being at variance often in their promptings to action. The desires are excited by



the objects to which they bear relation, and impel the will to their gratification, to which reason prescribes not abstinence, but *continence* and due limit and degree, or that "golden mean" so much extolled by moralists and poets. Against this rule the will or desires revolt, on which account both the will and the reason require training and discipline, — the will in order that it may be rendered obedient, and the reason that it may be strengthened and its authority increased by a wider knowledge of the truth. Such training softens the manners. "For it is an assured truth," to quote again from Bacon, "which is contained in the verses, —

"Ingenuas scilicet didicisse fideliter artes  
Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros."

[A true proficiency in liberal learning softens and humanizes the manners].

Liberal learning, then, is the great prop of civil society, which depends upon the good will, the likings, and friendships engendered among its members by their perception of each other's admirable and lovable qualities. "A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love." Friendship necessarily begins between two, and perfect friendship is probably confined to two of equal age and condition, of similar tastes and pursuits, with a reciprocal love of each other's excellence, cemented and strengthened by daily intercourse. Such a friendship is set forth in the play as existing between Rosalind and Celia, the latter of whom thus describes it: —

"We still have slept together,  
Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together;  
And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,  
Still we went coupled and inseparable."

Another beautiful picture of friendship is that between the youthful master, Orlando, and the aged servant, "old Adam," where the difference of age and condition is equalized by love.

A *couple*, therefore, bound by ties of love and friendship, is Society in its fullest form, or the form in which there is the fullest knowledge of each other's properties, the most unreserved exchange of thought and feeling, and particularly represents that companionship which, freed from toil and care, aims only at conversational enjoyment.



The nearest approach, practically, to this ideal is a couple of opposite sex, bound in marriage by mutual promises of love and fidelity. From this arises the "house," a term more comprehensive than *family*, for it implies a family established for several generations, with hereditary estates and honors, and with numerous branches, all the members of which are bound together by consanguinity and ties of love and service. "A house," therefore, may be taken as a model of a community, in which love and service and self-sacrifice constitute the standard of morals and manners; and the idea of a "house" is adopted in the play as a representative form of society at large, which is made up of an aggregate of "houses," one of which is the reigning house; and this feudal feature gives a mediæval cast to the picture, and furnishes a strong contrast to the unconventional forest life of Arden.

This will account for the profuse use of allusions to the family relationships throughout the piece, while the duties of love and friendship implied by them are brought into higher relief by the unnatural hatred of Oliver for Orlando, and the cruelty of the usurping Duke towards his brother.

With the family or house are necessarily connected *nurture* and *breeding*, which in their first forms are physical only, and consist in providing food, as is imaged in "the infant in the nurse's arms;" then follows mental nurture, as exemplified in "the school-boy, creeping, like snail, unwillingly to school;" after which succeed studies and exercises that mould the manners of the growing youth, and confer that refinement of mind and truth of character that mark the gentleman or man of *gentility*, — and thus gentility, which referred originally to dignity of birth, becomes but another name for the virtue and wisdom, which shine forth in superiority of manners, and which far more than lineage are the distinction of a "house."

The manners of men and the parts they play on the stage of life, though shaped very greatly by their native dispositions, seem to owe their deepest impress to their fortunes. Nature gives the original bias, but Fortune gives the education, which last must be taken as comprising, together with scholastic exercises, all those agencies, which are met with in the school of the world, and which *work upon the will* as well as upon the understanding — such as friends, company, counsel, persuasion, praise,

reproof — all which may be embraced under the head of discourse and conversation, as it is by means of these that they are brought into play. These have the power to mould the will and amend the mind, and also, if not properly applied, they have power to deprave it. Thus Orlando, at the opening of the play, is introduced, grieving over his want of education, and charging that his brother Oliver subjects him to base associations for the purpose of depraving his manners. He says: “He lets *me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother*, and so far as in him lies *mines my gentility with my education*.” And again, alluding to the clause in his father’s will in which Oliver is enjoined “to breed him well,” he says: “You have *trained me up like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentlemanlike qualities*,” and he demands “*such exercises as may become a gentleman*.”

It is, accordingly, the moulding power of education, or of that special training which men receive in those walks of life into which Fortune casts them, that mainly produces the great diversity of parts, which figure in this “wide and universal theatre” the world. Not to speak of the various professions and callings, each class, condition, sex, period of life has its peculiar affections, tastes, habits, manners, and criteria of excellence; and what is suitable for one is often considered wholly unfit for another; as Corin tells Touchstone: “Those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behaviour of the country is most mockable at the court.”

Both the shepherd and the courtier look at the world from their own point of view and under different relations, and both color the truth of things with their own feelings and prejudices.

It is proverbial that there is no disputing about tastes, yet beneath all the variety of dispositions and standards of propriety created by special training, there is one rule of reason, common to all men, which, applicable alike to all actions and passions, enjoins *continence* and the avoidance of all extremes, or, in other words, “the golden *mean*” as the universal rule of conduct and manners. This is equivalent to a perfect adjustment of conduct to the true properties and relations of things. It forbids the indulgence of excessive desires and humors, of extravagant opinions and behavior, and of improprieties of all kinds, in other words, of violations of reason, for that faculty being the distinctive property, or in Baconian language “propriety” of man, every



unreasonable word and act is an *impropriety*. Consequently, the test whether "the golden mean" or the exact point of equality between the too much and too little has been hit lies in the ability to render a sufficient reason for one's words and actions. But invariably to act with judgment and good sense is the perfection of education, and implies "a very universal knowledge of the truth of things," for the mind can judge correctly only in proportion to the extent and accuracy of its knowledge.

On improprieties in each other men are constantly passing judgment. No two persons, not even the most intimate friends, can associate without judging of each other's mind and person as displayed in conversation, bearing, manners, dress, powers of pleasing, and many similar points of appearance and deportment. Every folly and absurdity in word and act is noted — mentally, at least — and excites reproof and ridicule. Want of respect and civility are always particularly reprehended. And so deeply seated in human nature is this spontaneous censure of ill-manners that it takes a special literary form in Satire, and is the source also of that special character, the cynic, who finds nothing in human customs but folly and vice and spends his life railing at the evil which his own experience has taught him. But like schoolboys, who, when chidden, stammer out some excuse, so in the greater school of the world offenders are ever ready with reasons to justify, or at least to explain and extenuate their faults, — and this must especially be the case in a world where each one's will is his only law, — but as no sound reason can be given for what is really reprehensible, such excuses are necessarily false and fallacious, and hence it is that the dialogue of the piece, which abounds with expressions of liking, good wishes, kind salutations, and other forms of civility on the one hand, and of railing, chiding, and reproofs of faults on the other, is also copiously supplied with sophisms given as grounds of opinions and behavior generally; and indeed it characterizes the mental action of the personages of the piece that they all habitually assign reasons, for the most part fallacious, for what they say or do. Even the banter and raillery which takes up so much of the conversation of the characters is of the same nature, and consists, for purposes of mirth and laughter, of jocular accusations and good-natured ridicule, of which repartees are the confutations. It is remarked by writers on logic "that jests are fallacies," *i. e.* "fallacies so palpable," says



Whateley, "as not to be likely to deceive any one, but yet bearing just that resemblance which is calculated to amuse by the contrast. There are several different kinds of joke and raillery, which will be found to correspond with the different kinds of fallacies; the pun (to take the simplest and most obvious case) is evidently in most instances a mock argument founded on a palpable equivocation of the middle term — and the rest in like manner will be found to correspond to the respective fallacies, and to be imitations of the various arguments."

Both in praising and blaming, moreover, the judgment is deceived and led to false conclusions by the thousand fallacious opinions with regard to what is good and what is evil, which are held for truths in popular estimation. Such opinions abound in common discourse. And so important did Bacon think it to disabuse the mind of these fallacies which he calls "The Colours or Appearances of Good and Evil" (of which, as will be seen further on, the play contains numerous examples), that he recommends that a collection be made of them with their elenches and refutations appended, and he himself gathered a great number of them, of which he published specimens in *The Advancement*, and also in a separate treatise in the year 1597 (a little anterior to the production of this comedy), in the preface of which latter book he thus explains the nature and use of these fallacies.

"The persuader's labour is to make things appear good or evil, and that in a higher or lower degree, which, as it may be performed by true and solid reasons, so it may be represented also by *colours, popularities, and circumstances, which are of such force, as they sway the ordinary judgment either of a weak man or of a wise man not fully and considerately attending and pondering the matter. . . .* Lastly, to make a *true and safe judgment*, nothing can be of greater use and defence to the mind *than the discovering and reprehension of these colours*, showing in what cases they hold, and in what they deceive; which *as it cannot be done, but out of a very universal knowledge of the nature of things*, so being performed, it so cleareth man's judgment and election, as it is the less apt to slide into any error."

Therefore from this, too, it may be inferred that always to hit upon the truth and act with reason is the highest result of education, both moral and intellectual, and implies, together with a well-regulated will, a "*very universal knowledge of the natures*" or true "proprieties" of things.

But this is the same as the aim of philosophy, particularly the Baconian philosophy, the avowed object of which is to discover the true natures of things, and — when applied to human nature — to gain an acquaintance with those important properties of men and women that compose their dispositions and characters. One who has this knowledge measures the true worth of all objects and is affected by them in just that degree which their qualities call for; he is, therefore, equally removed from all extremes and one-sidedness, and so behaves as to be able to give for his conduct and opinions a reason founded on the truth of things.

But since the true properties of man as a social being are love and truth, and as these are the essentials of courtesy and good breeding, the wise man is the best bred man, the gentle-man, who loves best his fellows and most pities and succors their distress; whose culture makes him the most genial companion, the truest friend, the most agreeable talker, yet who always maintains a just measure and exact equality between his affections and the objects that inspire them. So Hymen says in the play: —

“Then is there mirth in Heaven  
When earthly *things* made even  
*Atone* (at-one) *together*.”

Measured by the ideal standard of propriety all men are unwise and most men fools, — and the play draws the line not more distinctly between what is good and evil than between what is wise and foolish, — for the great bulk of mankind, instead of practicing the continence of the desires which reason prescribes and which is the foundation of *content*, are hurried away by *sensibility* and *fancy* into excessive likings and dislikes and other false estimates; attributing properties to them who have them not and denying them to others to whom they clearly belong, and especially is this the case in instances of those sudden likings and love at first sight, in which fancy and feeling, kindled by some particular beauty or attraction, run into the greatest extremes and reach what Bacon calls “the *mad* degree of love,” — a doctrine which Rosalind also teaches, declaring that “love is a *madness* and deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do.” The lover gives to his mistress every conceivable property that can render her excellent. “There never was proud man,” says Bacon, “thought so absurdly well of himself as the lover doth of



the person loved, and therefore it is well said 'that it is impossible to love and be wise.'"

But the lookers-on apply to such one-sided judgments the rule of propriety, which pronounces all excess and disproportion between the passion and the object to be at variance with reason, and consequently folly, and they commend or reprehend in the degree in which they think this rule observed or violated. Thus Rosalind chides Sylvius for his infatuation with Phebe, and Phebe for her disdain of Sylvius: —

"You *foolish* shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,  
Like foggy south, puffing with wind and rain?  
You are a thousand times a *properer* man  
Than she a woman: 'Tis such *fools* as you  
That makes the world full of *ill-favour'd* children:  
'Tis not her glass, but you, that flatters her;  
And out of you she sees *herself more proper*,  
Than any of her *lineaments* can show her. —  
But mistress, know yourself: down on your knees,  
And thank heaven, *fasting*, for a good man's love:  
For I must tell you *friendly* in your ear,  
Sell when you can: you are not for all markets:  
Cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer;  
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.  
... Shepherdess, look on him better,  
And be not proud: though *all the world could see*,  
*None could be so abus'd in sight as he.*"

Act III. Sc. 5.

Of mock arguments and also of more formal fallacies, a great abundance is met with throughout the piece; but this is in accordance with the play-writer's usual method, which requires an illustration of that art or science that grows out of the means employed by the persons of the piece in the pursuit of their ends; but in a world of fancy, such as this play depicts, where the serious concerns of life are in abeyance, as it were, and men have no other business than mutual criticism of each other's humors and caprices, so that they all are in a manner put upon their defense, what they most need are reasons and arguments to prove themselves right and thus justify their preferences and tastes, however whimsical or absurd. Such a necessity, of course, leads to the use of false reasonings of all kinds, out of which grows the art of Sophistry; and consequently this art, as will be seen, is largely exemplified in the play.



If the foregoing attempt to set forth the moral basis of the piece involves much that is very familiar, the fault is fairly placed at the door of the poet, who creates his fanciful worlds out of such common truths, that the analysis of their fundamental conceptions only reveals what we are best acquainted with, for the simple reason that it is taught us in every hour of our daily experience. That which the play-writer has done for us and for which he merits what Wordsworth invokes on poets generally, "blessings and eternal praise," is that he has imparted to these homely and common aspects of life a never-fading beauty by enveloping them in the luminous haze and golden glow of art and poetry.

Nurture, education, breeding, taken in their broadest sense of *amending the mind and improving the manners*, include discourse and conversation among their chief agencies.

And here note may be taken of a resemblance between the "platform" or moral plan of this play and some views of Bacon respecting learning and education.

In his "Discourse touching Helps for the Intellectual Powers" he says: "Of all living and breathing substances, the perfectest (Man) is the most susceptible of help, improvement, impression, and alteration; and not only in his body but in his mind and spirit, and then again not only in his *appetite and affection*, but in his powers of will and reason . . . and as to the *will of man* it is that which is most *maniable and obedient*, as that which *admitteth most medicines to cure and alter it*. The most sovereign of all is *Religion*, which is able to change and transform it in the deepest and most inward inclinations and motions" [of which an instance is given in the play in the conversion of the tyrant Duke, —

"Duke Frederick, hearing how that every day  
Men of great worth resorted to this forest,  
Address'd a mighty power, which were on foot,  
In his own conduct, *purposely to take*  
*His brother here and put him to the sword* :  
And to the skirts of this wild wood he came ;  
Where *meeting with an old religious man*,  
After *some question with him, was converted*  
Both *from his enterprise, and from the world* ;  
His crown bequeathing to his banish'd brother,  
And all their lands restor'd to them again  
That were with him *exil'd*"], —

"and next to religion," the "Discourse" goes on to say, "is opinion and apprehension, whether it is infused by *tradition* and *institution* or wrought in by *disputation* and *persuasion*" [that is, by formal teaching and transmission of knowledge (which is time and again alluded to in the play), or by disputation, discourse, and persuasive speech and conversation; instances of which make up the web of the dialogue and fill it with arguments, counsels, persuasions, and similar attempts to *move the will* to some certain course, but more particularly is this method seen in examples (on the comic plane) of Rosalind "curing by counsel" Orlando of love; and in Jaques' plan of reforming the world by satire. This latter says, —

"Give me leave  
To speak my mind and I will through and through  
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world  
If they will but patiently receive my medicine],"—

"and the third is *example* . . . and the fourth is when one affection is *healed* and *corrected* by *another*, as when cowardice is remedied by shame;" or, he might have added, love by teasing and vexation, which is the method practiced with Orlando by Rosalind, who having heard her "old religious uncle read many lectures against courtship," professes to be able to cure Orlando of love by taking upon herself the part of his mistress, and in this character putting before him "an example" of the fickle and wayward properties of the sex. She says:—

"Ros. I profess *curing it by counsel*.

Orl. Did you ever cure any so?

Ros. Yes, one, and in this manner. He was to imagine me his love, his mistress; and I set him every day to woo me: at which time would I, being but a moonish youth, *grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking; proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles; for every passion something, and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this colour; would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him, now weep for him, then spit at him; that I drave my suitor from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness; which was to forswear the full stream of the world and live in a nook merely monastic: And thus I cured him; and this way will I take upon me to wash your liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in't."*

<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The doctrines illustrated in the above light and trivial instances (suitable, however, to a play which is a *Device* filled with jests) receive an exposition of great gravity and seriousness in *Troilus and Cressida*.

And in *De Augmentis*, again, Bacon speaking of the amendment of the mind and of the means "*which have operation on the mind to affect and influence the will and appetite and so have real power in altering manners,*" enumerates among others "*custom, exercise, habit, education, company, friendship, praise, reproof, exhortation, books, studies, etc.*"

The influence of these agencies is not so much marked in special instances, though these are not wanting, as in their general diffusion throughout the piece, some one or other of them being put in operation in every scene for the purpose of affecting the will. They are wrought into the motives of the characters and the conduct of the action, as, for instance Oliver's working on Charles, the wrestler, to take the life of Orlando; or old Adam's exhortation to Orlando to fly; or Celia and Rosalind's entreaties to Orlando to forego the wrestling, or Jaques' counsel to Touchstone not to marry; and indeed there is hardly a scene that will not furnish an instance in point.

The characters in *As You Like It* represent men who play a part in life considered as a play; and this is emphasized by making the characters, from one motive or another, designedly assume and act a part by adopting some humor or opinion for their own pleasure or convenience or by affecting sentiments and feelings not entirely their own.

Such a one is the old Duke, who is distinguished by goodness and wisdom, and is therefore an embodiment of the highest breeding. He exhibits conspicuously that benevolence which is the bond of Society; and no doubt whether in or out of Arden, would be the same gentle man that finds "good in everything;" but being called upon to meet misfortune with the resources of philosophy, he practices a doctrine similar to one laid down in a book of philosophy by Bacon, who, in a famous passage of *The Advancement*, in which he treats of the education of the will and affections, and of the different dispositions and characters of men, thus states it.

"In the culture and cure of the mind of man, two things are without our command, points of nature and points of fortune. . . . In these things, therefore, it is left us to proceed by application.

'Vincenda est omnis fortuna ferendo' " <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All fortune may be overcome by endurance or suffering.



"But when that we speak of suffering, we do not speak of a dull and neglected suffering, but of a *wise and industrious suffering*, that *draweth and contriveth use and advantage* out of that which *seemeth adverse and contrary*." Bacon's Works, Vol. VI. p. 331.

This wise rule the Duke practices, for being compelled to encounter the hardships of a forest life, he claims that they are more than compensated by the freedom they ensure from the perils of a court. He says:—

"Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,  
Hath not old *custom* made this *life* more *sweet*  
Than that of *painted pomp*? Are not these woods  
More free from *peril* than the envious Court?  
Here feel we not the penalty of Adam<sup>1</sup>—  
The seasons' difference—as the *icy fang*,  
And *churlish chiding* of the *winter's wind*,  
Which, when it *bites and blows upon my body*,  
Even till I *shrink with cold*, I smile and say,  
This is no *flattery*; these are *counsellors*,  
That *feelingly persuade me what I am*.  
*Sweet are the uses of Adversity*,  
*Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous*,  
*Wears yet a precious jewel in his head*:  
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
*Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks*,  
*Sermons in stones, and good in everything*."

<sup>1</sup> Knight, in his edition, adheres to the reading of the first folio, "Here feel we not the penalty of Adam." The change of *not* to *but* was made by Theobald. Knight remarks in a note: "What is the *penalty of Adam*? All the commentators say, the 'seasons' difference.' On the contrary, it was, '*In the sweat of the face thou shalt eat bread*.' The seasons' difference, it must be remembered, was ordained before the fall, and was in no respect a penalty. . . . But how could the Duke say, receiving the passage in the sense suggested, 'Here feel we not the penalty of Adam.' In the first act Charles the wrestler, describing the Duke and his co-mates, says, 'They fleet the time carelessly as they did in the *golden world*.' One of the characteristics of the golden world is thus described by Daniel:—

'Oh happy golden age!  
Not for that rivers ran  
With streams of milk and honey dropp'd from trees.  
Not that the earth did gage  
Unto the husbandman  
Her voluntary fruits, free without fees.'

The exiled courtiers led a life without toil,—a life in which they were content with little,—and they were thus exempt from the *penalty of Adam*."

It may be observed that the quotation from Daniel is but a translation of Tasso's chorus, "O bella età dell' oro," before alluded to as the probable source of the title of the play.

The Duke thus exhibits “a wise and industrious suffering,” and obviously contriveth *use* and *advantage* from adversity ; so far that one of his followers replies, repeating the thought : —

“Happy is your grace  
That can translate the *stubbornness of fortune*  
Into so quiet and so sweet a style.”

The Duke’s philosophy, however, is the irony of the poet, and his assumed contentment with a savage life is belied by his indirect admission that the forest is only tolerable so far as it offers analogies with the refinement of the world of learning that he has left behind him. It is that he can find “tongues in trees” and “sermons in stones” that he conceives it endurable ; but he wisely adapts his manners and sentiments to his situation, and plays a part both for his own ease and to cheer his companions. But that it is a mere counterfeit is clear from the joy with which he as well as his companions welcome the news that they can return again to their former lives. He tells them that —

“Every of *this happy number*  
That have *endur’d shrewd days and nights with us*  
Shall *share the good of our returnèd fortune*  
According to the *measure of their states.*”

Orlando, who is introduced to us as a noble and ingenuous youth, deploring his lack of education and ambitious of distinction, and who is as modest, withal, as meritorious, having fallen in love, pursues his fancy to the greatest extreme. If not madened by his “Angelica” into being *furioso*, like his great namesake, he is nevertheless quite extravagant enough to pass for an ideal lover of romance. Having been forced to fly from home, he takes refuge in Arden, and there gives full career to his “mad humour of love.” If he may not proclaim his passion among knights and ladies, he will, at least, teach it to the wilds and woods, and make rocks and trees vocal with the praises of his mistress. To this end, he carves the name of Rosalind on the barks of trees, “hangs odes on hawthornes and elegies on brambles,” and deludes himself with the thought that the very name of his mistress is sufficient to confer civility and elegance upon the desert and waste places. Of course, this is but the effervescence of youthful passion, and in giving way to it he is acting a part inconsistent with his usual staid character. In the

following verses, he exhibits his invention and his susceptibility of the spirit of the forest.

"Why should this a desert be ?  
 For it is unpeopled ? No ;  
*Tongues* I'll hang on every tree  
 That shall *civil sayings* show.  
 Some, how brief the life of man  
 Runs his erring pilgrimage ;  
 That the stretching of a span  
 Buckles in his sum of age.  
 Some of violated vows  
 'Twixt the soul of friend and friend ;  
 But upon the fairest boughs,  
 Or at every sentence end  
 Will I *Rosalinda* write ;  
 Teaching all who read to know  
 This quintessence of every sprite,  
 Heaven would in little show," etc.

In the wooing of "Ganymede," also, he willfully imposes upon himself a deception, and acts a part that he knows is unreal, and at the close marks this unreality by saying to the counterfeit Ganymede, who has just told him that on the morrow he cannot serve his turn for Rosalind, "I can no longer live *by thinking*."

The character of the Duke is foiled by that of Duke Frederick, who is as cruel and rapacious as the old Duke is benevolent and philosophic ; and in like manner the character of Orlando is foiled by that of Oliver, who entertains towards his younger brother a malignity so excessive that it has led critics of high name to think it without the scope of nature. Men ordinarily justify their preferences or dislikes by showing some ground for their feelings in the properties of what they like or hate, but Oliver hates Orlando for the very properties that should win his love. He says : "He is *gentle, never schooled, and yet learned, full of noble device, of all sorts enchantingly beloved, and indeed so much in the heart of the world and especially of my own people that I am altogether misprised*." But so deep are his envy and hate at being outshone by these excellences, that he adds : "There's nothing my soul loathes more than he."

Of this passage, Coleridge remarks : "It is too venturous to charge a passage in Shakespeare with want of truth to nature. . . . But I dare not say that this seeming unnaturalness is not in the nature of an abused willfulness, when united with a strong



intellect. In such characters there is sometimes a gloomy self-gratification in making the absoluteness of the will (*sit pro ratione voluntas*) evident to themselves by setting the reason and conscience in full array against it."

This may be true, and it is altogether likely that such a fact relative to the will would be inserted by the philosophic poet in a play of which the will and its education, or the want of it rather, is virtually the theme.

Oliver clearly acts a part in his dissembling and his devices against Orlando.

Both the "tyrant duke" and the "tyrant brother" are instances of men who make their will the law.

Jaques is an impersonation of that species of cynicism which a long acquaintance with the follies and vices of mankind is apt to engender, — especially in minds naturally inclined to observe and laugh at the foibles of others without any particular wish to reform them. He has been a traveler, and knows cities and men, and has come to the conclusion that the mass of mankind are a crowd of fools. The Duke upbraids him with having been a libertine in his youth, and tells him that his satire will but expose his own corrupt manners; but the indifference with which Jaques treats the accusation raises a suspicion that the Duke has fallen into the usual error of good people who comment on the faults of others, of overstating the case, and that Jaques is not quite so dark as he is painted. It is true he is well acquainted with vice, but there is no sign in him of a bad heart or of a corrupt nature; on the contrary, he is secretly sympathetic. His humor is cynical, but he is a good-natured snarler, not hating the world but only laughing at it, and however plain the truth he speaks, he never seeks to wound. Having for friendship's sake accompanied the Duke to Arden, he falls in with the tone of the place, and to such an extent does he carry the pensiveness of forest meditation, that he becomes, as it were, the *genius loci*, and is called "the melancholy Jaques." But this seems but a device, an assumption of an unreal character which he adopts as a humorist, not as a cynic, and as a parody of that "luxury of woe," that delightful sadness which is inspired by the shade of melancholy boughs. Watched by his companions, he affects to weep over a wounded deer, but shows how superficial is his sensibility by the activity of his fancy, which moralizes the spectacle,

as a mere intellectual pleasure, into a thousand similes. His excessive sensibility in fact has no more foundation in feeling than his paradox that the Duke in killing venison is as great a tyrant as his usurping brother has in logic. His real feeling, and the amusement he extracts from the weak points of his comrades, comes out upon his entering with a party of foresters, who have slain a deer, — an event to which he gives a mock importance, while he enjoys a covert laugh at the pride and vanity of the successful huntsman.

*Jaq.* Which is he that kill'd the deer ?

*Lord.* Sir, it was I.

*Jaq.* Let's present him to the duke, like a Roman conqueror ; and it would do well to set the deer's horns upon his head, for a branch of victory. Have you no song, forester, for this purpose ?

*For.* Yes, sir.

*Jaq.* Sing it : 't is no matter how it be in tune, so it makes noise enough."

This surely is a melancholy that has a strong vein of humor and jocularity beneath it.

Jaques, in his first scene, discloses the true nature of his "humorous sadness." He asks for a song of Amiens, who tells him that it will make him "melancholy ;" to which he replies, in a jesting tone, "*I thank it : I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs.*" His so-called melancholy is a willful humor, a play of his fancy, that needs stimulus and food for its exercise and life ; a thing with which he amuses himself and his companions, but which has nothing to do with the heart. In fact it appears more akin to merriment than sadness.

Jaques is evidently a great favorite with his fellow exiles, and though pretending a love of solitude, he is on all occasions the longest and loudest talker. The Duke is fond of his society, and loves to engage in disputation with him ; but it may be suspected that Jaques finds at times the Duke's philosophy a bore, for when told that the Duke had been all day seeking him, he says : "I have been all day to *avoid him* ; he is too *disputable for my company.*"

Jaques meets in the forest Touchstone, who is diverting himself over the humors of the place by moralizing with affected gravity on the flight of time. The incongruity of the "motley fool" yielding, or pretending to yield, to the spirit of the forest, accords with Jaques' own view of the absurdity of extolling such



a life of idleness as the true life of man, and it gives him the keenest enjoyment. It is an emblematic representation in his eyes of the folly of forest meditation. If he had ever had any melancholy in his disposition, this spectacle, it would seem, would have cured him outright. He says : —

“ When I did hear  
*The motley fool thus moral on the time,*  
 My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,  
*That fools should be so deep-contemplative ;*”

[present company not excepted (*sub-auditor*)]

“ And I did laugh, sans intermission,  
 An hour by his dial.”

Jaques' laughter, like his weeping, is in the extreme, and both to a great extent unreal. His repugnance to sting and wound by his satire is seen in that it is always general ; and this generality he praises in professed satire as the feature that makes it useful. He aims at vice, and not at particular persons.

“ Why, who cries out on pride  
 That can therein tax any private party ?  
 Doth it not flow as hugely as the sea ? ”

And he points out that it is only those who are weak enough to wince under the lash who give satire a particular application.

“ He that a fool doth very wisely hit,  
 Doth very foolishly, although he smart,  
 Not to seem senseless of the bob. If not,  
 The wise man's folly is anatomis'd  
 Even by the squand'ring glances of the fool,” etc.

Jaques, so far from being a prey to spleen, cannot live without society. After having had a taste of Orlando's wit and good sense, he solicits his company, and proposes to sit down with him and rail “ at our good mistress, the world, and all our misery,” — for pastime. He is also attracted by Ganymede (the disguised Rosalind), and asks that he may be better acquainted with him. Rosalind tells him that “ they say that he is *a melancholy fellow*,” to which he assents, but goes on to show that his melancholy is, after all, but a whim, “ *a melancholy of his own*,” an artificial product, which he has “ compounded from many simples, extracted from many objects,” and which he indulges as an humor or mood of his mind.



Romantic as Jaques professes himself to be in his love of solitude, of melancholy, and of meditation, he is the echo in Arden of the outside world, of its vice, its folly, and — its common sense.

At the close of the piece, when the play in Arden is played out, and the company there are about to return to society and resume its duties, "the old gentleman," as Audrey calls him, drops the part he so long has played, returns to himself, and takes leave of the Duke and his companions with a grace of manner and a warmth of heart which bespeak both the true friend and the finished gentleman. His valedictory takes the form of a *will* or *bequest*.

"You to your former honour I bequeath [*To the DUKE*]  
 Your patience and your virtue well deserve it.  
 You to a love that your true faith doth merit [*To ORLANDO*].  
 You to your land and love and great allies [*To OLIVER*].  
 You to a long and well-deservèd bed [*To SYLVIVS*].  
 And you, to wrangling ; for thy loving voyage [*To the CLOWN*]  
 Is but for two months *victuall'd* : So to your pleasures ;  
 I am for other than for dancing measures."

Jaques, at the close, preserves his real character as a student of human nature and of its humors and fancies by hieing off to the converted Duke, in order to gain what knowledge he can from a study of his change of heart, for, as he says, —

"Out of these convertites  
 There is *much matter to be heard and learn'd*."

That Jaques is a humorist beneath the mask of melancholy is a view first started by Ulrici, and afterwards taken up and enlarged upon by Maginn. The same line of thought is followed here because, besides appearing to be the correct analysis, it also displays the special design and artistic skill with which Jaques is drawn as acting a part, and thus made specially fit (as are the other *dramatis personæ*) for a character in a piece which represents the world as a theatre, and "all the men and women merely players."

The spirit of life in Arden, with its contradictory play of feeling, its sadness and its merriment, its tears and its smiles, its sorrows and its contentment, culminates in the character of Rosalind. Her extreme sensibility renders her keenly alive to her father's misfortunes and her own, whilst her fancy and buoyant disposition enable her at will to hide her sorrows under a mirthful

or careless deportment. She is perhaps the character who is the most natural and free-spoken of any in the play; who is most ingenuous in her manners, and totally free from affectation, yet she acts a part throughout. In fact, she acts a double part, first that of a youth, and then as a youth, that of a woman. But this has reference only to her external action.

In her nature, Rosalind is a combination of those properties which make up the highest excellence in that social world, which exists only for pleasure and conversation. All the endowments of a brilliant conversationalist belong to her, and she is, simply, the most delightful companion in the world. She has sensibility, quick sympathy, inventive fancy, sprightly wit, genial humor, spontaneous utterance with most felicitous expressions; and united with these qualities great knowledge of life and men, as well as of books. And to add still another charm to this fascinating talker, she softens the vivacity with which she sometimes rallies others with a grace of manner and a sweetness of disposition which win faster than her tongue offends. Dr. Johnson says "that Rosalind is a very *learned lady*." This is true, but her learning has no tinge of pedantry, and appears only in learned allusions, which she converts to pleasantry by her humorous application of them. It is, however, her knowledge of the world which gives life and zest to her conversation; she seems to be acquainted with all sorts and conditions of men. She is the centre of every group she appears in; as soon as she enters, the sparkle of conversation begins. Orlando, her lover, is reduced to a mere listener, while she pours out with the greatest volubility and readiness of invention her memorable warnings to him against the dangers of love and the fickleness of the sex. She has a word, and an apt one, for every one. As an instance of her invention the following passage may be cited, in which she rallies Sylvius, and in which invention itself is made a topic of the discourse.

Sylvius had brought Rosalind a letter from Phebe filled with protestations of love, and Rosalind, in order to rally Sylvius out of his infatuation for Phebe by disparaging her, pretends that the letter is abusive, and thus descants on its *contents* and *style* :—

"Ros. [*reading*]. Patience herself would startle at this letter,  
And play the swaggerer ;— Bear this, bear all ;—  
She says I am not fair ; that I lack manners ;  
She calls me proud ; and that she could not love me



Were man as rare as Phoenix. 'Ods my will !  
 Her love is not the hare that I do hunt ;  
 Why writes she so to me ? Well, shepherd, well,  
 This is a letter of your own device.

*Syl.* No, I protest, I know not the contents ;  
 Phebe did write it.

*Ros.* Come, come, you 're a fool,  
 And turn'd into the extremity of love.  
 I saw her hand ; she has a leathern hand,  
 A free-stone-colour'd hand ; I verily did think  
 That her old gloves were on, but 't was her hands ;  
 She has a huswife's hand : but that 's no matter : —  
 I say, she never did invent this letter ; —  
 This is a man's invention, and his hand.

*Syl.* Sure it is hers.

*Ros.* Why, 't is a boisterous and a cruel style,  
 A style for challengers ; why, she defies me  
 Like Turk to Christian : woman's gentle brain  
 Could not drop forth such giant-rude invention ;  
 Such Ethiop words, blacker in their effect  
 Than in their countenance : will you hear the letter ?

*Syl.* So please you, for I never heard it yet ;  
 Yet heard too much of Phebe's cruelty.

*Ros.* She Phebes me. Mark how the tyrant writes.

[*Reads*] Art thou god to shepherd turn'd  
 That a maiden's heart hath burn'd ?  
 Can a woman rail thus ?" etc.

This is obviously a piece of acting, and a very entertaining one.

In her intercourse with Orlando, Rosalind exhibits consummate tact, a quality without which there can be no agreeable companionship, and presents throughout a contrast between her real and assumed sentiments. Her fancy lets loose a flood of affected levity and caprice to hide her deep and earnest love, yet she is nevertheless frank, outspoken, and unconstrained. The reader who is in the secret of the part she is playing can readily discern that her gayety is but a cloak for her seriousness, her fancy for her sensibility, and that her impulsive freedom of speech is the best possible proof of the purity of her heart. A good example of this is when she and Orlando, having gone through with a mock-marriage, Celia being the priest, her reflections upon the gravity of such a step and the possible inconstancy of her lover almost betray her through the seriousness of the mood they inspire ; but she at once runs off into a voluble description of her perverse properties as a wife : —



"I will be more *jealous* of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen, more *clamorous* than a parrot against rain, more *new-fangled* than an ape, more *giddy in my desires* than a monkey; I will *weep* for nothing, like Diana in the fountain: and I will do that when you are *disposed* to be *merry*, I will *laugh* like a Hyen, and that when thou art *inclined to sleep*."

It may possibly be alleged that a maiden so young as Rosalind, and educated as a princess, could not be so well versed in the ways of the common world, or be so well acquainted with the seamy side of the world's manners as her sprightly speech shows her to be; but this presentation of life is modeled on the *idea* of an Invention, in which we do not look for a precise adjustment between character and circumstance, or between motives and action; and therefore whilst the disproportion which no doubt exists in the comedy between some of the characters and their fortunes, is not enough to create too strong a sense of unreality, it is enough to give to the play the air of a Device or Invention which professedly is not a true portraiture of reality. On this account, also, lions and palm-trees are introduced into a French forest, to say nothing of the emblematic character of Hymen, appearing in person in the last act.

This comedy is a medley of scenes, sylvan and pastoral, the former of which predominate and give tone to the piece, and to them the latter are attached much as Rosalind describes her dwelling as being "on the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat." The pastoral side is represented by the characters Sylvius, Phebe, Corin, and Audrey, who are impersonations of the simplicity characteristic of that Arcadia or golden world imagined by the poets,—a region of peace and innocence where the only sorrows are those of restless love, and the only cruelties those of coy and disdainful shepherdesses. These characters are perhaps not so elegant nor so highly idealized as those of the Italian pastorals, as, for instance, the *Aminta* and *Il Pastor Fido*, which had appeared at dates (1572, 1585) just anterior to the production of *As You Like It*, and with which the writer of that play might have been and no doubt was acquainted,<sup>1</sup> but they are conceived in the same spirit. The principal scene in which they appear (Act III. Sc. 5) is an idyl in itself. As, however, the structure of the piece is what we are concerned with here, and not

<sup>1</sup> Ben Jonson alludes to the *Pastor Fido* in *Volpone*, 1605. Dymock's *Pastor Fido* appeared 1602.

its effect upon the imagination, it is sufficient to point out that, in keeping with the *idea* of the play, this scene is introduced as a "*pageant*." Corin enters and says to Rosalind:—

"If you would see a *pageant truly play'd*  
Between the pale complexion of true love  
And the red glow of scorn and proud disdain,  
Go hence a little, and I shall conduct you,  
If you will mark it.

*Ros.* Bring us but to this sight, and you shall say  
I'll *prove a busy actor in their play.*"

It will be observed that this scene is distinguished from both what precedes and what follows it by a higher poetical coloring. The contrast, moreover, of the *naïveté* and innocence of the lovers with the vivacity and worldly knowledge of Rosalind is so striking that of itself it marks the scene as in the nature of a mime or interlude.

Sylvius is no common shepherd; he is all sighs and similes, all poetry and passion, and is a type of a class, not of men, but of stage characters, such as figure in the pastoral dramas above mentioned, of Tasso and Guarini. He has sighed so long for the disdainful Phebe that he has become an oracle of love; and when called upon to tell what it is to love, he anatomizes the passion into its various properties in a masterly manner, and acts as a kind of Coryphæus to the chorus of distressed lovers about him.

"*Phebe.* Good shepherd, tell this youth what it is to love.

*Syl.* It is to be made all of sighs and tears,  
And so am I for Phebe.

*Phe.* And I for Ganymede.

*Orl.* And I for Rosalind.

*Ros.* And I for no woman.

*Syl.* It is to be made all of faith and service;  
And so am I for Phebe.

*Phe.* And I for Ganymede.

*Orl.* And I for Rosalind.

*Ros.* And I for no woman.

*Syl.* It is to be all made of fantasy,  
All made of passion and all made of wishes,  
All adoration, duty, and obedience,  
All humbleness, all patience, and impatience,  
All purity, all trial, all observance,  
And so am I for Phebe," etc.

Phebe, like the others, acts a part by feigning sentiments which are unreal, as in her pretended anger with Ganymede, of whom she has become suddenly enamored; and in her device of the letter, which she fills with extravagant protestations of love, but which

“By the stern brow and waspish action  
Which she does use as she is writing it,” —

she persuades Sylvius to believe is “bitter and passing short.” Her description of Ganymede is a pretty piece of acting, for while her love incites her to praise, the necessity of deceiving Sylvius compels her to disparage, so that between the two extremes she is held at the *mean*.

“*Phebe*. Think not I love him, though I ask for him :  
'Tis but a peevish boy ; — yet he talks well ; —  
But what care I for words ? yet words do well,  
When he that speaks them pleases those that hear.  
It is a pretty youth ; — not very pretty ; —  
But sure he's proud ; and yet his pride becomes him ;  
He'll make a proper man. The best thing in him  
Is his complexion ; and faster than his tongue  
Did make offence, his eye did heal it up.  
He is not very tall ; yet for his years he's tall ;  
His leg is but so so, and yet 'tis well ;  
There was a pretty redness in his lip,  
A little riper and more lusty red  
Than that mix'd in his cheek ; 't was just the difference  
Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask.  
There be some women, Sylvius, had they mark'd him  
In parcels as I did, would have gone near  
To fall in love with him ; but, for my part,  
I love him not, nor hate him not,” etc.

Happiness, — or “good, pleasure, ease, content, whate'er its name,” — which some seek in great fortune, others in philosophy, Corin seems to find in phlegm. He has neither sensibility nor fancy enough to disturb his equanimity, and nothing can surpass the dead flat level of his passive acquiescence in whatever Fortune can dispense. He says : —

“I am a true labourer ; I earn that I eat, get that I wear, owe *no man hate, envy no man's happiness, glad of other men's good, content with my harm ; and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck.*”

This is a most unexceptionable character so far as its properties go, and one well adapted to flourish under the reign of Saturn



or in The Fortunate Isles. Indeed it may be suspected that there is a touch of satire in the portrait; that he is, in fact, an example of the contentment of a contemplative life as opposed to the struggles of a life of action; yet the fortunes of the world, if left to the Corins in it, might as well be left to Corin's sheep so far as progress and improvement are concerned.

As Corin is an exemplar of *content*, so old Adam is one of *continence*; and thus represents the positive pole of the play. This is marked in the following lines:—

“Let me be your servant:  
Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty:  
For in my youth, I never did apply  
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood,  
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo  
The means of weakness and debility.  
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter  
Frosty but kindly,” etc.

Touchstone, the court fool, is, by virtue of his vocation, the actor of a part, since it requires both wit and wisdom to play the Fool. Out of attachment to his mistress, he relinquishes the comforts of the court to undergo the hardships of the forest, and this bit of self-sacrifice puts him in accord with that kindness and friendship which are made the chief motives of the piece; but though he is not devoid of feeling and fancy, his whole vocation lies in putting to the touch of reason the humors and likings of others, and thus determining their wisdom or folly. He is the standard which, in one way or another, measures them all. He is ready with an argument for or against, as the case may be,—any proposition with respect to the good and evil in men and things; yet whether he reasons in jest or in earnest he always preserves his poise of thought, and in his preferences and dislikes avoids all extremes and one-sidedness. He, therefore, keeps the golden mean. This balance of judgment is shown in his reply to Corin, who asks him how he likes a shepherd's life.

“Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious. As it is a spare life, look you, it fits my humour well; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes against my stomach.”

Although Touchstone represents the reason, he does not, therefore, always reason correctly; on the contrary, it is his humor to indulge in the grossest sophistry, for he lives in a world where man's will or pleasure is his law, and where, therefore, the business of the reason is to invent proofs that the will is always right. Consequently Touchstone's arguments are parodies on those judgments of men who pretend to refer their inclinations to their reason, but who are always able to prove the expediency of following their desires. For instance, wishing to marry, he at once proves the step expedient, and with a most satirical humor rests his argument on the great honor that will accrue to him from the infidelity of his wife.

"As a wall'd town is more worthier than a village," he says, "so is the forehead of a married man more honourable than the bare brow of a bachelor."

In the same spirit he ridicules the oaths with which men support their false conclusions with respect to the good and evil of their likings and dislikes, as is instanced in his proof of the paradox that the knight who had sworn directly contrary to the fact that the pancakes were good and the mustard naught was not forsworn.

*Touch.* Mistress, you must come away to your father.

*Cel.* Were you made the messenger?

*Touch.* No, *by mine honour*; but I was bid to come for you.

*Ros.* Where *learned you that oath*, fool?

*Touch.* Of a certain knight, that *swore by his honour they were good pancakes and swore by his honour the mustard was naught*: now, I'll stand to it, the pancakes were naught and the mustard was good; and yet was not the knight forsworn.

*Cel.* How prove you that, in the *great heap of your knowledge*?

*Ros.* Ay, marry, now *uninuzzle your wisdom*.

*Touch.* Stand you both forth now: stroke your chins and *swear by your beards that I am a knave*.

*Cel.* *By our beards*, if we had them, *thou art*.

*Touch.* *By my knavery*, if I had it, *I were*; but if you *swear by that that is not*, you are not forsworn; no more was this knight, *swearing by his honour, for he never had any*; or if he had, he had sworn it away before ever he saw those pancakes or that mustard."

His sense of propriety and aversion to extremes are expressed in a series of quibbles, with which he confounds honest Audrey's moral perceptions by proving that whether she be well or ill-

favoured, her honesty is entirely superfluous, and, in fact, much better dispensed with: —

*Touch.* Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical.

*Aud.* I do not know what poetical is: *Is it honest in deed and word? Is it a true thing?*

*Touch.* No, truly; for the truest poetry is the most feigning; and lovers are given to poetry; and what they swear in poetry, may be said, as lovers they do feign.

*Aud.* Do you wish, then, that the gods had made me poetical?

*Touch.* I do, truly; for thou swear'st to me thou art honest; now, if thou wert a poet, I might have some hope thou didst feign.

*Aud.* Would you not have me honest?

*Touch.* No, truly, unless thou wert hard-favoured; for honesty coupled to beauty is to have honey a sauce to sugar.

*Aud.* Well, I am not fair, and therefore I pray the gods make me honest!

*Touch.* Truly; and to cast away honesty on a foul slut were to put good meat into an unclean dish," etc.

He shows his own honesty, however, by adding, "But be it as it may be, I will marry thee."

As soon as Touchstone arrives in Arden he gives his judgment on the place: "Ay, now am I in Arden; *the more fool I*; when I was at home, I was in a better place." But his truth to his friends leads him to say, "Travellers must be content." He scans the follies around him and at once assumes his own part in the play, which is that of burlesquing the manners of others. He grows sentimental, like Jaques, and lays him down in the sun and ruminates with mock profundity on the flight of Time; or if Rosalind sighs for love, he likewise grows lackadaisical over reminiscences of Jane Smile. He even carries his imitation of the humors of others so far as to meditate matrimony, but not so seriously but that when told by Jaques that Sir Oliver Martext, being a poor workman, would not marry him well, he argues the expediency of not being well married as opening a door to his escape in case he should change his mind.

"I am not in the mind," he says, "but I were better to be married of him than of another; for he is not like to marry me well: and not being well married, *it will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife.*"

This, however, is not premeditated treachery, for his nature is founded in truth; it is a whimsical affectation of worldly wisdom, which in all important matters keeps a path open for retreat.



It may be observed that Touchstone's argument is drawn from one of the "Colours of Good and Evil," laid down by Bacon in his Treatise on that subject in the following terms:—

"That which keeps the matter open is good; that which leaves no opening for retreat is bad," etc. See also De Aug. Book VI. ch. iii. Soph. 7.

Unlike the "fancy-mongers" in Arden, Touchstone selects a wife upon calculation. Honesty, he thinks, before beauty, and claims the hand of honest Audrey; giving as his reason that she is "a poor virgin, sir, an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own; a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that no man else will. Rich honesty dwells like a miser, in a poor house, as your pearl in your foul oyster."

Touchstone is versed both in men and books; he tells us that if any man doubts that he has been a courtier he will furnish the proof. "I have trod a measure, I have flattered a lady; I have been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors; I have had four quarrels, and like to have fought one." He overwhelms the clown William who is a rival and an aspirant for Audrey's hand by a formidable display of knowledge, both scholastic and worldly; bringing to bear logic, rhetoric, and grammar on the one hand, and the arts of policy and court intrigue on the other; at the same time marking his own balance by translating—for William's better understanding—his courtly terms derived from the French into their plebeian Saxon equivalents.

*Touch.* Give me your hand. Art thou learned?

*Will.* No, sir!

*Touch.* Then learn this of me: *To have, is to have*; for it is a figure in rhetoric that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other: For all your writers do consent that *ipse* is he; now, you are not *ipse*, for I am he.

*Will.* Which he, sir?

*Touch.* He, sir, that must marry this woman. Therefore, you clown, abandon, which is in the vulgar, leave,—the society,—which in the boorish is company, of this female, which in the common is woman: which together is, abandon the society of this female: or, clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest; or, to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death, thy liberty into bondage: I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel; I will bandy with thee in faction; I will o'er-run thee with policy; I will kill thee in a hundred and fifty ways: therefore tremble, and depart."

In short, Touchstone embodies the spirit of irony, which runs through the play, and is knowledge and reason hidden under the mask of a Fool.

There is in one of the scenes a direct allusion to Gargantua; and the character of Touchstone is Rabelaisian in the breadth of its philosophic satire.

It has been contended that the reason why Shakespeare's plays are so deep and true is, that he was born with a mind in perfect harmony with nature, and that therefore his pictures of life are but faithful reflections of nature, and are the works of an intuitive and spontaneous knowledge; but Shakespeare's genius seems always conscious of its work and its methods, and although by no effort can we go under his fundamental conceptions, even if we have the good fortune of reaching them, yet the structure of his pieces shows that these conceptions were obtained by study and meditation, and were the fruits of a mind that had fathomed to the bottom every subject of which it treats; consequently, he could present such subjects with all their relations in plays which are the products of both art and philosophy. And in addition to this proof that he worked upon a plan, there is another point, which is certainly not accidental but, contrariwise, is confirmatory of his philosophic design, that is, he makes his plays resonant throughout with diction that constantly awakens associations with the conceptions contained in the scheme or idea of the piece. This nice workmanship would not have been found in the plays had they simply mirrored nature; but they are not nature nor copies of nature, nor intended to be such, but art, which makes its own world, in imitation, no doubt, of nature, yet with an intentional difference and under artificial forms and arbitrary conditions; it is nature passed through the alembic of the mind, which extracts the essences and ideas of things, and embodies them in shapes to which it gives symmetry and harmonious relation by causing them all to stand conjointly in unity as integral portions of one and the same plan or idea. There is, in fact, in a Shakespearian play a conventional or artificial element lying at its very heart, which is the result of its being founded on a literary "form," that pervades character and composition, and, indeed, every part of its organism, with a special influence. It converts the play into a dramatic imitation of that particular branch of literary art from which the "form" is taken, as, for



instance, *Cymbeline* — as was adverted to in the closing remarks on *All's Well*, etc. — is a history, and in it the characters are themselves records of experience; *The Winter's Tale* is a work of art in which the characters are themselves works of art of more or less merit through their imitation of the beautiful; *Troilus and Cressida* is a parable, in which the characters are objects of the sense that stand for ideas that are objects of the intellect; and in like manner with other plays; and this comedy of *As You Like It* is a *devise* or *device* of which the characters, after the manner of devises, make their wills and pleasures the law, and in accordance also with the idea of a device or stage-play they all — Jaques, Touchstone, Sylvius, Phebe — are of a fanciful cast of mind and wear a theatrical air; so that instead of being exclusively the poet of nature (as he is always called) he invariably represents life as modified and tinged with the method and hues of that literary art from which he derives his idea. This idea governs the diction, phraseology, and imagery of the piece as well as its characterization. In *As You Like It* — if a brief recapitulation may be made — this artistic idea is that of a Device or Invention, the mere creation of fancy, and having for its end sport and pleasure. These plays, notwithstanding the extravagance of their designs, were, nevertheless, amenable to taste and judgment, the rule of the *nequid nimis*. In conformity with this idea, the comedy presents a fantastic and *quasi*-golden world, where men are relieved from toil and care and follow their fancies, humors, and desires; in all respects acting their wills and pleasures. These desires and pleasures are the most strongly evinced in the mutual loves and likings of the sexes, and these, moreover, are the most prone to run into extravagance and excess, and thus violate reason and propriety, which prescribe *continence*, or the *golden mean*, as the rule in which true pleasure and content are found. But this proportion between the passions and their objects can only be attained by *nurture* or education, which disciplines the will and enlightens the reason with a knowledge of the true properties of things by which it is enabled justly to estimate their values.

This statement, though very brief and imperfect, of the artistic and moral basis of the piece, is perhaps sufficient to bring into view some of the leading conceptions involved in it, — such as *device*, *invention*, *will*, *pleasure*, *nurture*, *continence*, etc., — one



or two of which may be selected for the purpose of briefly tracing their influence on the style and composition of the play.

*Continence*, in its moral sense, is equivalent to the observance of the *golden mean*; and the mean is the equal between two extremes: therefore the notions of *equality*; *measure*, *proportion*, on the one hand, and of *extremes* and *excess* on the other, are found frequently repeated. The first gives rise to the use of such phrases as the following: "*By how much* defence is better than no skill, *by so much* a horn is more precious than to want," or "*By so much the more* shall I to-morrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, *by how much* I shall think my brother happy," etc.

With *equality* and *mean* may be taken all words signifying to *accord*, to *agree*, to *come together*, to *meet*, which last had the sense of agreement or concurrence, as in the "Defense of Poesy," Sir Philip Sidney, speaking of the Greek word *poietes* (a poet) as signifying a *maker*, says, "wherein, I know not whether by luck or wisdom, we Englishmen have *met* with the Greeks, in calling him *maker*."

Extremes are noted both in contrast and in conjunction. Of the first, the following is an example: —

"I would thou couldst stammer that thou mightst *pour* this concealed man out of thy mouth as wine comes out of a narrow-mouth'd bottle, either *too much at once* or *none at all*."

Of the union or meeting of extremes, the following are instances: —

"Chewing the food of *sweet and bitter fancy*."

"He who *lives and dies* by bloody drops."

"I could match *this beginning* with an old tale."

"An *inch of delay* is a *South-sea off discovery*."

"A *great reckoning* in a little room," etc., etc.

*Content*, in the moral sense of *contentment*, *pleasure*, *satisfaction*, etc., is the same word as *content*, in the physical sense of the *thing contained*. Richardson defines *contented*, *contentus*, *qui continet quod animo satisfaciatur*, i. e., he who *contains* what *satisfies* his mind; and thus *satisfied*, *having enough*, *sufficient*.

Under the words *contain*, and *continent*, from the same root, are found the following definitions: "*Holding and keeping within*

or together, connecting ; (*vide*) *keeping* or *holding* (*se*) the *passions within*, temperance, *patience restrained*, *forbearing*. All these significations, and many more of like import, under one form of speech or another, are introduced into this comedy. Indeed it is necessary to have recourse to the numerous meanings of the Latin *continere* (the root of *contain*, *content*) to find a sufficiently full variety of definitions to explain the vocabulary of *As You Like It*.

To keep is used also in the sense of to watch and guard, as, "The house *keeps itself*;" also in the sense of *to feed*, in which it accords with words classed with *nurture*, one of the most prominent conceptions of the piece.

*Content*, in the sense of the thing contained (now more generally used in the plural, *contents*, particularly with regard to writings), is necessarily associated with the *containing vessel* and its relative *fullness* and *emptiness*. Vessels themselves, of which a considerable number are mentioned, such as *goblet*, *cup*, *bottle*, *dish*, *bag*, *satchel*, *pouch*, and others, suggest capacity to *hold* and *contain*. Analogous to vessels in this respect are articles of attire, as *bonnet*, *shoe*, *slipper*, *glove*, etc. The attire itself is an investiture, and is alluded to as *containing* the wearer. Rosalind, inquiring of Orlando's apparel, asks, "*Wherein* went he?"

*Filling* and *emptying* are expressed under many forms, and the correlative prepositions *into* and *out of*, *within* and *without*, enter largely into the phraseology.

Fullness again is associated with *plenty*, *abundance*, *fatness*, etc., and emptiness with *want*, *penury*, *leanness*, *lankness*, *hunger*, etc. So, too, the terms significant of *containing*, *holding*, *staying*, *restraining*, and the like are balanced by those denoting *loosing*, *turning out*, *pouring out*, *escaping*, *throwing away*, and others which convey the notion of freedom from restraint, or retention, or a movement out of or from within. A few examples may be quoted as specimens.

"*Make the doors upon a woman's wit, and it will out at the casement; shut that, and it will out at the key-hole; stop that, and it will fly with the smoke out at the chimney.*"

"*Ros.* My affection hath an unknown bottom like the bay of Portugal.

"*Cel.* Or rather bottomless, that as fast as you pour affection in, it runs out."

In the following beautiful lines, in which the figure is taken

from *binding* and *unbinding* a sheaf, the same undertone of *fullness* and *emptiness* is detected.

"So holy and so perfect is my love  
And I in such a *poverty of grace*  
That I shall think it a *most plenteous crop*  
To glean the broken ears after the man  
That the main harvest reaps : loose now and then  
A scatter'd smile and that I'll live upon."

A man's properties and qualities are his *contents*, and he is estimated according to his fullness or emptiness, with respect to merits or faults.

Orlando, speaking of Rosalind, says : —

"Therefore Heaven nature charg'd  
That one body should be fill'd  
With all graces wide enlarg'd," etc.

Jaques, the traveler, describing Touchstone, uses the same figure.

"And in his brain —  
Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit  
After a voyage — he hath *strange places cramm'd*  
With observation, which he vents  
In mangled forms," etc.

The analogy between properties and contents is carried in the play so far as to be applied to an abstraction having no material existence.

"Here's eight that must take hands  
To join in Hymen's bands  
If truth holds true contents."

Even in so slight a passage as the following, the same rhetorical method can be observed, together with diction and metaphor drawn from *nurture*.

"Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.

Ros. With *his mouth full of news*.

Cel. Which he will put upon us as *pigeons feed their young*.

Ros. Then shall we be *news-cramm'd*."

Those who take interest in these *minutiæ* (trifles, perhaps, but not beneath the attention of this most perfect of artists) can easily classify the diction by arranging it under the leading conceptions embraced in the plan of the play : it will no doubt be



observed that the notion of *nurture* in its physical sense of *breeding, feeding, food*, and the like, as well as in its mental sense of *education, teaching, counseling*, etc., is met with on every page.

*Continence* and *content* are the outcome of *nurture, philosophy*, or a *knowledge* of the properties of things. Of this philosophy we have a glimpse in Corin, who has penetrated the mystery of cause and effect so far as to know that "good pasture makes fat sheep, and that a great cause of the night is the lack of the sun;" yet rudimentary as is this knowledge, it is precisely the same in kind as that "very universal knowledge of the nature of things" which Bacon points out as necessary to detect the colors and fallacies that lurk in popular opinions; and this, again, is akin to that possessed by man before the fall, "by the light of which," as Bacon remarks in *The Advancement*, "he did give *names to other creatures, according to their proprieties*," a process which is continually repeated in almost every speech that men utter; for it is the office of the reason to rank things into sorts and classes according to their properties, and this is done by giving them names; wherefore accuracy and fullness of knowledge are manifested by calling things by their right names and thus attributing to them the properties of the class to which they truly belong; out of inattention to which rule arise all *improprieties* of speech and the *great mass of fallacies in reasoning*, for, as Bacon says, "the false acceptations of words are the sophisms of sophisms." And the poet, among the numerous fallacies which he has introduced into the piece, places a conspicuous example of the error growing out of a misnomer in the very opening scene.

"*Orlando*. My brother Jaques he *keeps at school* and report speaks goldenly of his profit; for my part, he *keeps me rustically at home*, or, to *speak more properly*, stays me here at home *unkept*; for *call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth, that differs not from the stalling of an ox?*"

Another instance occurs in the familiar lines:—

"Good morrow, *fool*, quoth I: *No, sir*, quoth he;  
Call me not *fool*, till *Heaven hath sent me fortune*."

Fortune favors fools; and Touchstone contends that as he has not received such favor, he had not the properties which entitled him to the name.

Another example of misnomer from ambiguity of words is the following:—

"*Oliver.* Wilt thou lay hands on me, *villain*?"

*Orlando.* I am no *villain* [*villein* or one of base extraction]. I am the youngest son of *Sir Rowland de Bois*; he was my father; and he is thrice a villain that says, such a father begot *villains* [*villeins*]."

*Oliver.* Get you with him, you old dog.

*Adam.* Is old dog my reward? *Most true*; I have lost my teeth in your service."

This is a common form of repartee, which admits the truth of a name used abusively, but, at the same time, gives properties to it which, while making it honorable to the person to whom it is applied, reflect shame on the person who has used it. It is a true elench or *re-proof*.

Touchstone ridicules these improprieties of speech in *Le Beau*, who tells the ladies that they have lost "much good sport" at not being present at the wrestling, where Charles the wrestler had thrown three young men, and broken their ribs. Touchstone asks:—

"But what is *the sport*, monsieur, that the ladies have lost?"

*Le Beau.* Why, this that I speak of.

*Touch.* Thus men may grow wiser every day! It is the first time that ever I heard *breaking of ribs* was sport for ladies."

The following is an instance of the different feelings excited by a name, just as different views are taken of the properties it implies:—

"*Duke.* What is thy name, young man?"

*Orl.* *Orlando*, my liege: the youngest son of *Sir Rowland De Bois*.

*Duke.* I would thou hadst been son to some man else.

The world esteem'd thy father honourable,

But I did find him still mine enemy.

. . . . .

*Orl.* I am more proud to be *Sir Rowland's* son,

His youngest son; and would not change that calling

To be adopted heir to *Frederick*."

A striking misapplication of names is thus noted by "Old Adam."

"*Adam.* Within this roof

The enemy of all your graces lives;

Your brother—no, no brother; yet the son—

Yet not the son;—I will not call him son

Of him I was about to call his father."

*Oliver* does not possess the properties of either a son or a brother.

In the next instance there is a reference of a thing to its class upon the discovery of its properties.

"*Oliv.* O that your highness *knew my heart in this.*

*I never lov'd my brother in my life.*

*Duke.* *More villain thou !*"

Rosalind makes an argument by calling Touchstone "a medlar," with the distinct avowal that he has the properties which entitle him to the name.

"*Ros.* Peace, you dull fool ; I found them on a tree.

*Touch.* *Truly, the tree yields bad fruit.*

*Ros.* I'll graff it with you, and then I shall graff it with a *medlar* ; then it will be the earliest fruit in the country, for you will be rotten ere you'll be half ripe, and *that's the right virtue of the medlar.*"

Touchstone's reply questions the validity of the argument.

"*You have said ; but whether wisely or no let the forest judge.*"

Another instance of a name depending on properties is this : —

"*Cel.* I found him under a tree, *like a dropp'd acorn.*

*Ros.* It may well be call'd *Jove's tree, when it drops forth such fruit.*"

Phebe's reasoning, that eyes cannot be called "murderers," rests on the obvious impropriety of such an appellation.

"*Phebe.* I would not be thy executioner ;

*I fly thee, for I would not injure thee.*

*Thou tell'st me there is murder in mine eye ;*

*'T is pretty, sure, and very probable,*

*That eyes, — that are the frail'st and softest things,*

*Who shut their coward gates on atomies, —*

*Should be call'd tyrants, butchers, murderers !*"

And in the ensuing lines, Phebe uses the argument *ad verecundiam*, or an appeal to Sylvius' reverence for the truth : —

"Now do I frown on thee with all my heart ;

And, if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee ;

Now counterfeit to swoon ; why, now fall down ;

Or, if thou canst not, *oh, for shame, for shame,*

*Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers,*" etc.

Rosalind disproves that Orlando is a lover by showing that he has not the properties which entitle him to be called by that name.

"*Orl.* I am he that is so love-shak'd ; I pray you, tell me your remedy.

*Ros.* There is none of my uncle's *marks* upon you ; he taught me how to know a man in love ; in which cage of rushes I am sure you are not a prisoner.



Orl. What were his marks ?

Ros. A lean cheek, which you have not ; a blue eye and sunken, which you have not ; an unquestionable spirit, which you have not ; a beard neglected, which you have not ; — but I pardon you for that ; for, simply, your having in beard is a younger brother's revenue. Then your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied, and everything about you demonstrating a careless desolation. But you are no such man ; you are rather point-device in your accoutrements, as loving yourself, than seeming the lover of any other."

The foregoing examples of the disagreement between things and their names, that is, between their actual properties and the properties their names connote, which on that account is called *impropriety* of speech, are so numerous as to indicate that their introduction is not accidental but systematic, and pursuant to some plan or idea lying at the bottom of the piece ; but such idea being that of a device, or representation of a world devised by fancy, where all the vagaries of desire must be excused by sophistry, it is plain that improprieties of speech and reasoning aptly find a place in it. They may also be taken to illustrate incidentally that imperfection of language in its relation to the properties of things which Bacon is ever harping on as the cause why logic, with its propositions composed of words, confused, ill-defined, and hastily abstracted from things, can never be a trustworthy instrument for the investigation of truth. *Vide Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 14-16, 43 ; De Aug. Book V. ch. iv. et passim.*

There are other special forms of argument introduced, of which the following is one from contraries : —

"If he *compact of jars* grow musical,  
We shortly shall have discord in the spheres."

The Duke's reproof of Jaques' love of satire is an instance of the argument *ad hominem* : —

"Ja. What for a counter would I do but good ?

Duke. Most mischievous foul sin in chiding sin,  
For thou thyself hast been a libertine.

And all the embossed sores and headed evils  
That thou with license of free foot hast caught  
Would'st thou disgorge into the general world."

The following sophism is based upon the "colour" that it is good to do what the practically wise do, or what those do whom it is becoming to imitate.

"*Cel.* Is 't possible on such a sudden you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son ?

*Ros.* The duke my father loved his father dearly.

*Cel.* Doth it *therefore ensue* that you should love his son dearly ? "

An argument from example is thus given : —

"*Oliver.* Marry, sir, be better employed and be naught awhile.

*Orlando.* Shall I keep your hogs and eat husks with them ? What prodigal's portion have I spent that I should come to such penury ? "

In 1597 Bacon published, along with the first edition of the *Essays*, a small collection of the "Colours of Good and Evil" (colorable arguments on questions of good and evil), which he afterwards enlarged and introduced into the *De Augmentis*. Of these colors, some are exemplified in the play, as, "That which approaches to good or evil is itself good or evil, but that which is remote from good is evil, that from evil good."

And he says : "It is commonly found that *things which agree in nature are placed together*, and that things of a contrary nature are placed apart ; for everything delights to associate with itself that which is agreeable, and to repel that which is disagreeable.

"But this Sophism deceives in three ways : by reason, first, of *destitution* ; second, of *obscuration* ; and third, of *protection*.

"By reason of *destitution*, for it happens that those things which are most abundant and excellent in their own kind *attract everything as far as may be to themselves, spoiling, and as it were starving all things in their neighbourhood*. Thus you will never find flourishing underwood near great trees. . . .

"By reason of *obscuration*, for all things that are excellent in their own kind have this, that though they do not impoverish and starve the things next to them, yet *they obscure and overshadow them*," etc.

These elenches are exemplified by Duke Frederick's answer to Celia, who has been defending Rosalind against his charges of treason on the ground that her intimacy with her cousin is so close, and that they so "agree in nature," that if one is a traitor the other must be also. He says : —

"She is too subtle for thee ; and her smoothness,

Her very silence and her patience

*Speak to the people and they pity her.*

Thou art a fool : she robs thee of thy name ;

*And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous  
When she is gone."*

Act I. Sc. 3.

Another of these "colours" is this:—

"That which it is good to be deprived of is in itself an evil; that which it is bad to be deprived of is in itself a good.

"This sophism deceives in two ways: by reason either of the comparative degrees of good and evil, or of the succession of good to good or evil to evil.

"By reason of *comparison*: if it was for the good of mankind to be deprived of acorns as food, it does not follow that that food was bad; acorns were good, but corn is better. . . .

"By reason of *succession*, . . . for where a bad thing is taken away, it is not always succeeded by a good thing, but sometimes by a worse."

Thus old Adam endeavors to persuade Orlando to fly from home in order to avoid the plots against his life, but Orlando argues that to escape such dangers by betaking himself to such a life as must succeed, would be to exchange one evil for another much worse.

*Adam.*

O unhappy youth,

Come not within these doors; within this roof  
The enemy of all your graces lives:

*This is no place, this house is but a butchery;  
Abhor it, fear it, do not enter it.*

*Orl.* Why whither, Adam, would'st thou have me go?

*Adam.* No matter whither, so you come not here.

*Orl.* What! would'st thou have me go and beg my food,

Or with a base and boisterous sword enforce

A thievish living on the common road?

*This I must do or know not what to do;*

But this I will not do, do how I can.

*I rather will subject me to the malice*

*Of a diverted blood and bloody brother."*

Act II. Sc. 3.

Beside the few instances of "colours" contained in the *De Augmentis* (among which, however, is the one already mentioned as used by Touchstone to uphold the expediency of his being married by Sir Oliver Martext, as he was not like to marry him well), Bacon also left a collection of them in manuscript, now



in the British Museum, one page of which is printed as a specimen in Spedding's Edition of Bacon's Works.<sup>1</sup> Of some of these, also, are found examples in *As You Like It*. And the first instance here given is particularly pertinent; it reaches the very heart of the play.

"That of which the contrary is an evil is itself a good; that of which the contrary is a good is itself an evil."

On this sophism the whole play stands; it furnishes the argument on which the old Duke relies to prove that a forest life, in woods and caves, being free from the vices and corruption of civilization, is a good, and more desirable than life at court, where such evils abound. It is not necessary to quote; the whole spirit of the play accords with this notion, which, in fact, gives the piece its peculiar charm. The answer, moreover, which Bacon assigns is in unison with the organic idea.

"It does not hold," he says, "in those things of which the excellence is seated in the mean or measure." This is "the golden mean," which is held up in the play as the rule of life.

Bacon also quotes as an elench the Horatian precept, "*Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt*," which we see pointedly exemplified in some of the characters, who pass from one extreme to its contrary.

Another "colour" is the following:—

"What is spoken on the score of flattery is a good; what on the score of slander is an evil."

This sophism deceives by reason of *envy*, and finds an example of such deception in old Adam's address to Orlando:—

"Your praise is come too swiftly home before you.  
Know you not, master, to some kind of men  
Their graces serve them but as enemies?  
No more do yours; your virtues, gentle master,  
Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.  
Oh, what a world is this, when what is comely  
Envenoms him that bears it!"

Act II. Sc. 3.

Another is this:—

"That of which the origin is a good incident is in itself a good; that of which it is a bad incident is itself an evil."

<sup>1</sup> Since the passage in the text was written, this manuscript has been published in an edition of Bacon's *Promus*, by Mrs. Pott, 1883.

This is used by the Duke Frederick to justify his cruelty to Rosalind : —

*Duke.* Let it suffice thee, that I trust thee not.

*Ros.* Yet your mistrust cannot make me a traitor :

*Tell me whereon the likelihood depends.*

*Duke.* Thou art thy father's daughter, that 's enough."

Act I. Sc. 3.

Those who will take the pains to examine the piece will find in it many examples of what are called technically "Sophistical elenchi." The Greek etymon of elench ( $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\chi\omicron\varsigma$ ) means a reproof, a confutation, and, as one who is confuted is put to shame, it came to have a moral sense of a reproach or disgrace. So likewise the English terms reproof and reprehension have a double meaning, reproof being equivalent to *reproach* and *reprehension* to *confutation*, and this double sense is made use of in the play, as in every scene the characters indulge in chiding, raillery, and reprehension. Thus the logical and moral sides of the play perfectly harmonize and coöperate to produce unity of impression. With such deep and hidden skill does this wonderful artist work out his effects.

The unreality also implied in playing a part, which is so conspicuous in this piece and which is in accordance with its idea as a play, is maintained with great skill and humor and, at the same time, truth to nature in the passage of pleasantry between Rosalind and Celia; of whom the first, impatient at the absence of her lover, but never doubting his truth, affects to think him faithless, while the latter by way of *badinage* confirms and exaggerates this opinion, each being conscious that the other is jesting.

*Ros.* Never talk to me, I will weep.

*Cel.* Do, I prithee ; but yet have the grace to consider that *tears* do not become a man.

*Ros.* But have I not cause to weep ?

*Cel.* As good cause as one would desire ; therefore weep.

*Ros.* His very hair is of the dissembling colour.

*Cel.* Something browner than Judas's : marry, his kisses are Judas's own children.

*Ros.* I' faith, his hair is of a good colour.

*Cel.* An excellent colour ; your chestnut was ever the only colour.

*Ros.* And his kissing is as full of sanctity as touch of holy bread.

*Cel.* He hath bought a pair of east lips of Diana : a nun of winter's sisterhood kisses not more religiously ; the very ice of chastity is in them.

*Ros.* But why did he swear he would come this morning and comes not ?

*Cel.* Nay, certainly, there is no truth in him.

*Ros.* Do you think so?

*Cel.* Yes; I think he is not a pick-purse, nor a horse-stealer, but for *his* verity in love, I do think him as concave as a covered goblet or a worm-eaten nut.

*Ros.* Not true in love?

*Cel.* Yes, when he is in; but I think he is not in.

*Ros.* You have heard him swear downright that he was.

*Cel.* Was is not *is*," etc.

Bacon writing of discourse says, "As for jests, there be certain things which ought to be privileged from it, namely religion, matters of state, great persons," etc.

This rule is thus exemplified. Touchstone, having ridiculed the knight who had sworn away his honor, Celia asks him, —

"Pr'ythee, who is it thou mean'st?

*Touch.* One that old Frederick your father loves.

*Cel.* My father's love is enough to honour him. Enough, speak no more of him; you will be whipp'd for taxation one of these days."

If this passage be not meant to illustrate a rule of manners in discourse, it will be very difficult to account for its introduction into the piece.

It is evident that this comedy treats of behavior and conversation or manners (which are included under *nurture*) which is one division in the Baconian philosophy of Civil Knowledge, but Bacon is very brief in his treatment of this branch of the subject, saying, "that this part of civil knowledge touching conversation has been elegantly handled and therefore I cannot report it for deficient" (De Aug. Book VIII. ch. 1). But his remarks respecting behavior, the carriage of the body and the countenance, the government of the speech, and other similar points appertaining to conversation and manners generally, coincide both with the letter and the spirit of all that is said in the play upon these subjects.

The irony with which the contemplative life is extolled in this comedy concurs with Bacon's views of the superiority of the active over the contemplative life. After laying down that what concerns the public good must always be preferred to the private, he says: "This being set down and firmly planted judges and determines some of the most important controversies in moral philosophy. For first, it decides the question touching the preferment of the contemplative or active life and decides it against Aristotle. For all the reasons which he brings for the contemplative respect



private good and the pleasure or dignity of a man's self, in which respect no question the contemplative life has the preëminence, being not much unlike that comparison which Pythagoras made for the gracing and magnifying of philosophy and contemplation; who, being asked by Hiero what he was, answered, 'that if Hiero were ever at the Olympian games, he knew the manner, that some came to try their fortune for the prizes, and some came as merchants to utter their commodities, and some came to make good cheer and meet their friends, and some came to look on; and that he was one of them that came to look on.' But men must know that in *this theatre of man's life* it is only reserved for God and angels to be lookers-on.

"It decides also the question so earnestly argued between the schools of Zeno and Socrates on the one hand, who placed felicity in virtue simple or attended, which is *ever chiefly concerned with the duties of life*; and on the other hand, the numerous other sects, as the Cyrenaics and Epicureans, *who placed it in pleasure* . . . and the refined school of the Epicureans, which pronounced felicity to be *nothing else than the tranquillity and serenity of a mind free from perturbation*, as if they would have deposed Jupiter again, and restored Saturn with the Golden Age." De Aug. Book VII. ch. i.

These doctrines, which declare so decidedly for the superiority of a life of active duties over one of contemplation and the ease and tranquillity of the Golden Age, are identical with the teachings of this comedy in this respect, although such teachings are in a measure veiled by the irony with which the preference is given to the careless life of Arden.

The personages of the piece, moreover, exhibit those errors of judgment arising in great measure from biases of disposition and education, which Bacon classes as "Idols of the Cave," and which he thus describes:—

"Idols of the Cave are the idols of the individual man. For every one (besides the errors common to human nature in general) has a cave or den of his own, which refracts and discolours the light of nature; owing either to *his own proper and peculiar nature*; or to *his education and conversation* with others, or to the reading of books, . . . or to the differences of *impressions*, accordingly as they take place in a mind *preoccupied and pre-disposed* or in a mind *indifferent and settled*; or the like; . . .

whence it was well said by Heraclitus that men look for truth in *their own lesser worlds* and not in the greater or common world." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 42.

The characters of the piece illustrate these idols; they are all stamped by education and habit, and "refract and discolour" the truth of things by their dispositions; and the play, as a whole, may be looked upon as a model in a most beautiful poetic form of those worlds which men build in their own minds and which consist of the distorted opinions and judgments which they adopt, under the influence of their peculiar tastes, respecting the wisdom and folly, the properties and qualities of the men and women, who, for each of them, make up the world. It is a common observation that even the external world takes its coloring to our eyes from our affections, and is just what we make it.

"We receive but what we give  
And in our life alone does Nature live;  
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud."

Over the inner realm of thought our moods and passions exercise a still more potent sway, and the world is one of goodness or one of evil, according to the frame of mind with which it is regarded.

This subjection of the judgment to a predominant humor, or, to use the language of Bacon's Aphorism, "*the difference of impressions accordingly as they take place in a mind preoccupied and predisposed or in a mind indifferent and settled,*" is set forth in the well-known passage in which Rosalind points out those with whom Time travels in different paces: —

"Ros. I pray you, what is 't o'clock?

Orl. You should ask me what time of day; there's no clock in the forest.

Ros. Then there is no true lover in the forest; else sighing every minute and groaning every hour would detect the lazy foot of Time as well as a clock.

Orl. And why not the swift foot of Time? had not that been as proper?

Ros. By no means, sir. Time travels in divers paces with divers persons: I'll tell you who Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal.

Orl. I pr'ythee, who doth he trot withal?

Ros. Marry, he trots hard with a young maid, between the contract of her marriage and the day that it is solemnized: if the interim be but a se'nnight, Time's pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven years.

Orl. Who ambles Time withal?



*Ros.* With a priest that lacks Latin and a rich man that hath not the gout : for the one sleeps easily because he can not study, and the other lives merrily because he feels no pain ; the one lacking the burden of lean and wasteful learning, the other knowing no burden of heavy, tedious penury : These Time ambles withal.

*Orl.* Who doth he gallop withal ?

*Ros.* With a thief to the gallows : for though he go as softly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there.

*Orl.* Who stays it still withal ?

*Ros.* With lawyers in the vacation ; for they sleep between term and term, and then they perceive not how Time moves."

This witty and sprightly dissection of moods and humors, of which the dramatic motive is simply talk for talk's sake, can certainly be taken for an illustration of "the *difference of impressions*" made upon the mind, owing to its being either "*pre-occupied or predisposed*," like that of the young girl looking forward to her marriage, or of the thief going to the gallows, on the one hand, or to its being "*indifferent and settled*," like that of the priest who lacks Latin, or of the lawyer who sleeps through vacation, on the other.

Thus judgment is governed by some prevailing emotion, and each one according to his temper and his part in life creates a world out of his own fancies and feelings. However, the world of *As You Like It* is one of love and benevolence, of fancy and wit, where even the cruel tyrant and the unnatural brother are readily converted to goodness ; a world which is extant nowhere but in day-dream and imagination, and which is the proper and elegant subject matter of a Device ; and therefore this play which represents human life as a theatre, and whose characters are governed by fancies and one-sided judgments and sophistical reasoning offers a dramatic exemplar of those images of the world which Bacon speaks of as being created "by the fancies of men in philosophical systems," and which he styles "*Idols of the Theatre*," because such systems are but "so many stage-plays representing worlds of their own creation, after an unreal and scenic fashion." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 44.

But aside from the philosophical significance which the play seems to possess, its artistic structure makes clear its design as a poem. The spirit of Society is ever seen looking through the veil of poetry with which Arden invests life and forces itself up through the freedom and individuality of the characters ; neither



the satirical Jaques nor the benevolent Duke being able to express the feelings inspired by the wild life they lead and the objects they encounter, but in terms that forcibly recall Society. Even the "nimble wit" of Rosalind, abounding as it does in imagery, does not furnish a half dozen similes drawn from nature. All her illustrations are taken from the oldest and most familiar social usages. Though her fresh feeling and frank speech betoken her a child of nature, yet in habit of thought and mode of expression she is the creature of education. The forest colloquies are filled with allusions to social culture, to manners and customs, to artificers and professions; to law, medicine, and divinity; to poetry, rhetoric, and the drama; to painting and drawing, music and dancing; to geography, travels, and voyages; to occult science and the learning of the schools; to mythology, philosophy, and the doctrine of metempsychosis. The associations thus awakened with the refinements of educated life deepen the seclusion of the desert, and at once temper and heighten the ideality of that world of fancy and feeling, of romance and sentiment, of musing and reminiscence to which the playwright has given the name of Arden. Yet in Arden the tendency of all things is to a reëstablishment of the social principle, and even before the exiles are restored to their rights by the sudden conversion of the usurping Duke, all the parties who are marriageable, not excepting Touchstone, have plighted their troth. And when in the depths of the forest the god Hymen enters, bringing in Rosalind, the representative of Society and its spirit of conversation, the comedy is clearly converted into a masque with an obvious emblematic meaning. The verses that are recited and the song in honor of Hymen, —

"Honour, high honour and renown  
To Hymen, *god of every town*," —

are the comment on the forest life, which we are thus taught is with all its fascinations wholly at variance with the duties of social man.

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

"FICTITIOUS dialogue" has always, in both ancient and modern times, been a favorite literary form, of which the greatest and politest writers have left specimens. These imaginary conversations were discourses or discussions between two or more speakers, in which each maintained his opinion on some question selected as the subject of the colloquy. They were contentions of wit and argument, and exemplified the variety of opinions that are entertained upon almost every subject by persons of different minds and callings; while in their conclusions they gather up such probable truth as serves for a determination of the question. These "skirmishes of wit" can, of course, be applied to any matter of opinion and in any style, although their essential characteristics seem to be polite conversation, enlivened by wit, argument, and knowledge.

But a fictitious dialogue falls under the general head of "discourse," which is properly the action of the mind (*discursus*) in passing from one thought to another, especially from premises to conclusion; whence the phrase, *discourse of reason*; and the "form" of a "discourse" as a species of writing is *the reason itself*, or the deduction of a conclusion from proofs.

In its rhetorical sense a "discourse" is a proposition with its array of proofs; it may consist of a single argument comprised in one sentence, or of a chain of arguments that fill a volume; it may be dialogue or soliloquy, but in all cases it aims at deducing conclusions from proofs in order to *form opinions and regulate conduct*.

How far the conclusions thus reached will have validity will depend upon the nature of the proofs employed.

In a dialogue or debate there will, of course, be counter propositions and proofs in order to rebut opinions and thwart proposed action.

Discourse or debate, of which the subject is human action, must relate to the end or the means; it will, therefore, embrace any

purpose or plan whatever, and in fact resolves itself into the exercise of judgment on the conduct of life.

*Purpose* and *proposition* are etymologically the same word; the *purpose* stands to the *end*, as the *proposition* does to the *conclusion*; the end attained is the purpose accomplished; the conclusion reached is the proposition proved, the one being in *practice* what the other is in *logic*. The execution of a purpose or a plan is therefore the embodiment of discourse in action.

Plans are patterns in the mind of contemplated action and become in practice the application of causes to produce effects. A *plan* is analogous or equivalent to an *idea* or archetype, or what Bacon calls a *platform*, as in the phrases, "The Exemplar or Platform of Good," "the *platform* of a king," or "the spirit of the world working in matter according to *platform*," that is, according to *plan*, *pattern*, or *idea*.

As *discourse* may be a single argument or a chain of arguments, so a plan may contemplate a single act or a sequence of actions constituting a course of conduct. And as *discourse* is simply the exercise of reason, so *plans* are simply patterns of practice. But to prefigure events correctly so that plans when carried out shall attain success, the mental patterns should exactly coincide with the truth of nature, and the chain of reasoning have in the outward world a practical form in a corresponding series of causes.

However familiar this statement may be, it is analogous, if not virtually identical, with a fundamental doctrine of Bacon's philosophy, which, as formulated in one of his earlier works, the *Delineatio Secundæ Partis*, runs thus: —

"To know the cause of a given effect or nature in any subject is the aim of *human knowledge*; and upon a given basis of matter to impose or superinduce any desired effect or nature is the aim of *human power*. And these aims, to one who closely observes and truly judges, are one and the same; for that which in contemplation is as the cause, in operation is as the means; we know through causes, we operate through means."

What Bacon calls "cause" in the foregoing passage, he elsewhere terms "*idea*" and "*form*," the discovery of the "*form*" being the great distinguishing feature of his philosophy. Of the sense in which he uses the word "form," it may be said, without entering into metaphysical niceties, that the "*form*" is that essen-



tial nature of a thing which is the cause of its specific properties. Bacon calls it "*ipsissima res*," the very thing itself, and says that it differs from the thing only as the internal differs from the external (Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 13). Therefore to know "the *form*" is to have in the mind an exact *idea* or *pattern* of the very nature of the thing.

To arrive at this exact representation of the truth is what Bacon means by saying that "philosophy is a *happy match* between the mind of man and the nature of things." He also calls "knowledge *the double of what is*," and says that "the *essential form* of knowledge is nothing but the representation of the truth, for the *truth of being and the truth of knowing are one*." Adv. p. 125.

A *discourse*, then, being an array of proofs for the formation of an opinion, or to determine a plan or course of action, a play which shall take the idea of a discourse as its formative principle (according to Bacon's notion of producing a good work of art, as laid down in Aphorism 31, Book II. *Novum Organum*, on the Instances of the Wit and Hand of Man) will present characters who by persuasions and proofs bring themselves or others to some particular way of thinking or acting, and who embody discourse in action by the execution of plans which are themselves intended to create belief or mould opinion. Such a play is *Much Ado*, of which the business of the characters is to persuade each other to adopt some opinion or follow some line of conduct, or they criticise and discuss the natures and qualities of friends and acquaintances, sustaining their views by proofs consisting of personal knowledge, or report and hearsay, or inferences deduced from signs and circumstances or other testimony.

The action of the piece, moreover, is produced by the prosecution of plans formed for the purpose of enforcing assent to some opinion or the adoption of some course of conduct.

To find a necessary framework of fact for such a representation, the plot is made up of incidents taken from that side of society to which, after business and serious affairs are ended, resort is had for conversation and social intercourse, diversified and enlivened with balls, banquets, hospitalities, and entertainments of a like nature. This is emphatically called "Society." The first law of Society in general or of association with one's *kind* is *kindness* or sympathy; good-will founded on good opinion is the first tie between men. Forms and ceremonies are necessa-

rily introduced for the regulation of social intercourse, and these gradually gain ground — as it is the tendency of form to encroach upon and usurp the respect and authority due to reality — until kindness and genuine feeling are replaced by empty complaisance, and life at last becomes thoroughly conventional, and ruled by arbitrary *Opinion*.

This aspect of life is best seen among the aristocracy of an old town like the Messina of the play, where social customs have been long settled, and the rank, wealth, and personal distinction of the community are gathered about a Court or into a circle, which forms the summit of Society. In this circle the influence of Opinion is particularly conspicuous, inasmuch as it affects minuter points of behavior and usage than it does among the more general body of the people. On this account, it may be taken as the type of the force of public opinion generally; and so potent is it to fashion the man, both inwardly and outwardly, as in sentiments, opinions, taste, dress, habits, manners, style of living, and other points of conduct, that it is called "*The Fashion*" or "*The Mode*" (*modus*); that is, the measure or pattern in the mind, by which its votaries must shape their judgments and their behavior. In its particular sphere, it claims to be the standard of thought and action, and to represent what is best and most approved in character and manners.

Manifestly, these forms and modes of thinking and acting, thus arbitrarily dictated by Fashion, and adopted without inquiry, differ widely from those of reason, which prescribes the true mode or measure of conduct, itself being the *idea* or *form* of man, — even taking the word "form" technically in the Baconian sense, — as will appear by adverting to the following passage from the *Novum Organum* (Book II. Aph. 1), which passage, however, is but a later statement of the doctrine already cited from the *Delineatio* with respect to "the aim of human knowledge:"—

"Of a given nature to discover *the form or true specific difference* . . . is the work and aim of human knowledge."

But the *true specific difference*, which is here used as an equivalent for *form*, refers to the definition of species by genus and difference. Thus man belongs to the genus *animal*, the *differentia* or characteristic being the *reason*, and he is therefore defined logically "a rational animal." Consequently, the reason is *the form*, and is the true standard and measure of human conduct, all



deviations from which are necessarily error, while conformity to such standard—in the regulation of the manners—appears in truth and sincerity of speech and behavior, which are in direct contrast with the affectations, simulations, and false pretenses of “Fashion.”

To the reason, as the form or specific difference, Beatrice alludes in one of her flings at Benedict.

“*Leon.* You must not, sir, mistake my niece ; there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedict and her : they never meet but there’s a skirmish of wit between them.

*Beat.* Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the *whole man governed with one* : so that if he have *wit enough to keep himself warm* let him bear it for a *difference between himself and his horse* ; for it is *all the wealth he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature.*”

On the other hand, the forms of Fashion (with respect to apparel), depending on mutable opinion, are thus spoken of :—

“*Borachio.* Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

*Conrade.* Yes, it is apparel.

*Bor.* I mean, the fashion.

*Con.* Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

*Bor.* Tush ! I may as well say, the fool’s the fool. But see’st thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is ? how *giddily* he *turns about* all the hot bloods, between fourteen and five and thirty ? sometimes *fashioning them like Pharaoh’s soldiers, in the reechy painting* ; sometimes *like god Bel’s priests in the old church window* ; sometimes *like the shaven Hercules in the smirch’d worm-eaten tapestry.*

*Con.* All this I see ; and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man,” etc.

This difference between Fashion and Form is, with respect to Man, the same as that which Bacon speaks of, with respect to the world at large, in Aphorism 23, Book I. *Novum Organum*, as follows :—

“There is a great difference between the *idols* of the human mind and the *ideas* of the divine, that is to say, between certain empty *dogmas* and the true *signatures* and marks set upon the works of creation as they are found in nature.”

It may be noted that Bacon uses the words *idols* and *ideas* antithetically ; by *idols* meaning, not false gods, but, according to the original sense of the word, “false appearances, illusions,” etc. As applied by him, the word refers to the innumerable prejudices,



biases, illusions, vain imaginings, and other errors that beset the reason, whether arising from its own inherent weakness, or from education and condition in life, or from ambiguity of language, or from the authority of false opinions, into which the mind is led by fallacious proofs and vicious demonstrations.

On the other hand, by *ideas*, a word which in its original sense is *form*, are meant, in its philosophical sense, the mental patterns according to which things were created, and as they are found really existing in nature.

It is apparent from the foregoing that the contrast between the factitious and the real, which is always a feature of a Shakespearian play, lies in this comedy between Fashion and Reason, that is, between Opinion and Truth, as exemplified in human life and manners.

In a play, moreover, which views life as a "discourse," in which the business of the characters is to form opinions about the conduct of others as well as to regulate their own, it is manifest that the model man is he whose every thought and action are governed by right reason, — the distinguishing characteristic of man, — and not by fashion and opinion, the product of fancy or feeling.

The deference paid in artificial life to opinion is an excess of the spirit of Society, which tends to destroy individuality, to suppress natural emotion, and make it the subject of ridicule; to invest trifles with importance, and treat serious matters with levity; and in short, to establish in the place of reason and nature conventional rules of life and conduct; and this comedy, owing to its representation of these features, becomes a direct counterpart of *As You Like It*, the two plays looking at the same subject from directly opposite points of view.

This supposition derives support, also, from the fact that they were written in or about the same year.

In the forest life of Arden, Society is dissolved, public Opinion does not exist, and consequently there is no conformity to a general standard; each individual follows his own fancy and makes his pleasure his law; but in *Much Ado*, we are introduced to a ceremonious world of ladies elegantly attired, and gentlemen "of the cloak and sword," among whom all usage and behavior are subjected to an arbitrary standard, the product of artificial life, and resting solely on Opinion.

In Arden, through an excess of individual freedom, man becomes neglectful of social duty; in *Much Ado*, the tyranny of Society controls individual feeling and judgment, and blunts the kindness and sympathy which should be the rule of manners towards one's kind.

In Arden there is a tendency from a life of nature back to custom and education; in *Much Ado*, there is a tendency from conventionalism and artificial manners back to simplicity and nature.

In the matter of invention also, these plays may be contrasted: *As You Like It* illustrating the invention of the fancy, exercised for pleasure, and taking as its artistic principle the "*form*" of a *Device*; *Much Ado* illustrating the invention of the reason, exercised in arguments, and the formation of plans and opinions, and taking as its artistic principle the "*form*" of a *Discourse*.

As opinion in high life attains an exceptional force, the social virtues and vices that depend upon it also flourish with great luxuriance in the same soil. For instance, the force of Opinion as a regulator of conduct appears in the love of honor and the fear of shame, or in the lighter forms of the desire of admiration and the dread of ridicule, — sentiments which acquire their greatest strength where character is most sensitive. Honor and regard for reputation in some measure usurp the place of duty; *noblesse oblige*; but duty is imperative in and of itself, whereas the very breath of life of honor depends upon others and exists in Opinion. Yet on its observance Society is peremptory; and with reason, for it is on the repute of its members being high-minded and honorable that that trust in each other's good faith and veracity is founded, without which Society could not exist. Hence the care with which good name is guarded, and the deep offense that is given by an imputation of a breach of honor or of the want of it. Promises and pledges of one's word are with this class held to be the strongest of obligations; civil law is not looked to for the reparation of wrongs, but insult and dishonor are avenged by the sword in single combat.

Yet in this artificial world where jest and *persiflage* so much prevail, and civility is so often but a hollow courtesy, there is a latent distrust of professions, and a general sense of prevalent insincerity. And this is marked among the characters of this play; as, for instance, when the Prince professes the warmest

interest in Claudio's suit to Hero, the latter, who is conscious of the levity with which the most serious matters are liable to be treated by his companions, has no faith even in his friend and benefactor, but says: "You speak this *to fetch me in*, my lord." And it is observable as a point of manners that out of this consciousness of being distrusted grew the use of oaths in familiar conversation, by which originally the speakers hoped to gain credit by putting themselves upon their honor and good faith; but these oaths, through fashionable usage, became afterwards mere empty and vapid expletives. The dialogue of this picture of fashion shows the constant use of these petty and unmeaning attestations, — so finished, even *ad unguem*, is the work of this artist.

The world is made up of phenomena or appearances, which are the outward signs and proofs of the inward nature of things, and illusory and misleading as these often are, they are the only means of arriving at the truth; but whilst, in the physical world, appearances do not intentionally deceive, it is far otherwise in the moral and social spheres. Sincerity should mould manners and behavior should reflect the honest sentiments of the heart; and just as men think of others, and entertain for them admiration or scorn, should they express in their speech praise or ridicule, and in their actions respect or contempt; but in the world of Fashion, which is, *par excellence*, one of appearance, and exists for shows and externals alone, its members habitually veil their thoughts and feelings, and, for the sake of complaisance, fall in with the tone of those they converse with, as Benedict says to Claudio, "In what key shall a man take you to *go in a song*?" Fashionable manners constantly accept in apparent good faith the most hollow pretenses as realities, while unwelcome truths are with equal facility kept out of sight. Dissimulation becomes a rule of good breeding, and affectations and insincerities are sanctioned by Opinion as indispensable to civility. To cover one's real sentiments and purposes with a conventional manner is the characteristic of this realm of false appearance, and on this account it may be taken as typical of the deceitfulness of appearances in the world at large, and of the *fallacious nature of signs and proofs* by which the judgment is constantly misled into the acceptance of error.

It may be observed that the judgments of "Society" embrace



social and personal qualities as much, if not more, than moral ones, and the question is not merely how good or wise or worthy or reasonable, but also how witty, graceful, agreeable, beautiful, or well bred, or the contrary, is man or woman, and especially what is the rank, standing, estate, family, friends, and other like adventitious advantages that can render a person desirable or useful as an acquaintance, or eligible as a matrimonial match ; for in this comedy a *good match* is regarded as the central fact of social life, and the world of amusement depicted in it has its business, its policy, rivalries, and intrigues, of which the most important and interesting, especially among the younger and unmarried portion of it, have reference to making a good match that shall strengthen and secure social position, and be the envy and admiration of one's fashionable friends.

Benedict, communing with himself on marriage, enumerates the qualities in a wife, without which he modestly concludes that matrimony is hardly worth the attention of a sensible man.

"One woman is fair ; yet I am well : another is wise ; yet I am well : another virtuous ; yet I am well : but till *all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come into my grace*. Rich she shall be, that's certain : wise, or I'll none ; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her ; fair, or I'll never look on her ; mild, or come not near me ; noble, or not I for an angel ; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God."

Conversation is the amusement of Society, or rather, is Society ; and wit is the faculty most highly prized. In its exercise due form and measure ought always to be kept ; but quick wit and sound judgment are seldom found together. Nothing is more powerful than wit and the pride of wit to mislead the judgment, the satirist being both unfeeling and unfair, and seldom hesitating to sacrifice truth and character, whether of friend or foe, for a bon-mot.

Superiority of wit is necessarily stimulating to self-love. When Pope wrote the lines, —

"I must be proud to see  
Men, not afraid of God, afraid of me," —

he expressed not more the power, than the self-admiration, of the wit.

Another source of error in passing judgment on character lies in the envy and detraction which in this gay world often weave their darkest plots and invent their most defamatory fables,

whereby a vast amount of false evidence is put in circulation, much of which always gains credence, and the whole of which it is hardly ever possible to reach and entirely refute.

Pride, moreover, a vice inherent in Society, attains in patrician circles its utmost altitude of growth, and renders the members of the aristocratic class indifferent to the feelings, opinions, or even the existence of any beings outside of their own order. When to social superiority is added, as in the case of Beatrice, a conscious personal superiority of intellect, wit, beauty, or other gifts and graces, pride is frequently augmented to a degree of self-esteem that looks upon and treats others, however worthy, with the utmost disdain and scorn. Hero says of her :—

“ Nature never fram’d a woman’s heart  
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice :  
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,  
Misprising what they look on ; and her wit  
Values itself so highly, that to her  
All matter else seems weak : she cannot love  
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,  
She is so self-endear’d.”

So exaggerated a good opinion of one’s self is not merely a gross error in itself, it leads in forming opinions of others to errors far worse because utterly unjust and injurious. And so we find Beatrice, who plumes herself upon her quick apprehension, and who says, “ I have an eye ; I can see a church by daylight,” criticising her suitors with the most contemptuous ridicule, which has no warrant in truth, but is indulged simply out of an unfeeling wantonness of wit. Hero says of her :—

“ I never yet saw man  
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur’d,  
But *she would spell him backward* : if fair-fac’d,  
She ’d swear the gentleman should be her sister ;  
If black, why, nature, drawing of an antick  
Made a foul blot ; if tall, a lance, ill-headed ;  
If low, an agate very vilely cut ;  
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds ;  
If silent, why, a block mov’d with none.  
*So turns she every man the wrong side out ;*  
And never gives to *truth and virtue* that  
Which *simpleness and merit purchaseth.*”

Like all pride, moreover, a high sense of social and personal superiority tends to make its possessor heartless and inhuman,

and is capable, under indignity and insult, of the most savage revenge. Beatrice, whose family pride has been stung by the outrageous insult offered her kinswoman Hero, and who is filled with scorn and rage towards Claudio, exclaims : —

“Is he not *approv'd* in the height a villain, that hath slander'd, scorn'd, dishonour'd my kinswoman ? O, that I were a man ! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncover'd slander, unmitigated rancour, — O God, that I were a man ! *I would eat his heart in the market-place,*” —

an outburst which would not misbecome, perchance, the mouth of “the king of the Cannibal Islands,” yet so inhuman is the pride of the social class that claims to typify the highest refinement of manners that the deep reader of the human heart who wrote this comedy thinks it not too savage to be out of character for the brilliant beauty of the drawing-room.

The restricted sympathies, moreover, of a class which prides itself on its porcelain clay necessarily blinds the judgment to the true relations of life and that “good of society” which Bacon says “embraceth the form of Human Nature whereof we are members and portions,” or, in other words, those duties owing from man to man as a *human* being, for the form of Human Nature or of Man is, as we have seen, the reason which bids us live according to our nature or *kind*, and language itself might teach us that the true fashion or rule of conformity for social intercourse is *kindness* or sympathy, of which the complaisance of polite society is but a superficial imitation. This accords with the laws of nature, and is exemplified in the description of the joy of Claudio's uncle, to whom a messenger brings news of the great honor the Prince has conferred upon his nephew.

*Mess.* I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him ; even so much that joy could not shew itself *modest* enough without a badge of bitterness.

*Leon.* Did he break out into tears ?

*Mess.* In great measure.

*Leon.* A kind overflow of kindness. There are no faces truer than those that are so washed,” etc.

The use in the above passage of the word “modest,” in its Latin sense of “keeping due measure,” is immediately connected with the organic idea which makes the due exercise of the reason, whether in the formation of a correct opinion or the due indul-



gence of feeling, to consist of the true measure being preserved between the mind and its objects.

The Latin *modestia*, from *modus* (measure), is moderation, and transferred to behavior means *unassuming conduct*, and towards others *kindness* (*vide* Andrews' Lat. Lex. in v.), qualities that are conspicuous in Hero, whose marked feature is her *modesty*.

The want of *moderation*, on the other hand, is portrayed in the most spirited manner in Leonato and Antonio (Act V. Sc. 1). Leonato, in his grief, rejects all counsel. He says : —

“Give me no counsel.

My griefs cry louder than advertisement.”

Antonio tells him, —

“Therein do men from children nothing differ,” —

thus pointing to the mature *reason* as the true *form of man*.

In this world, where Opinion bears such sway, judgments on character, inasmuch as they particularly affect the happiness of their subjects, should always be founded on the strongest and surest evidence ; and the same rigorous rule which the experimental philosopher applies to the investigation of causes in the physical world for the discovery of the “form,” is equally necessary in examining causes in the human world ; yet in many, perhaps in most cases, the opinions that float through society — not merely fashionable society, but the community in general — are hardly more than conjecture and surmise, being seldom grounded on experience or direct evidence, and supported only by vague rumor, gossip, or other untrustworthy proof. This is notably true of reports affecting reputation, about which men adopt beliefs upon hearsay, and seldom measure their estimates of others by any true knowledge of what they actually are. Such opinions are of the nature of the conjectures, probabilities, and false appearances which are the product of false methods of proof, and of which Bacon speaks so often as making up the bulk of human knowledge, and as besetting the human mind to the exclusion of the truth, which last must be derived from close inquiry and strict test, which in a vast majority of cases in the moral world can never be made ; so that the mass of men are led by authority and general consent ; they fall into the current, and think and do as they see others think and do, and follow the fashion in opinion

as they do in dress. But to know men and to be able to count upon their actions, — for the most important use of knowledge of causes is to forecast the future with respect to human actions, and know whether men will abet us or thwart us, — we must penetrate their motives, and detect beneath the smooth surface of polite manners the passions which are their springs of action and which witness their true natures. And as the true measure of likings and dislikes is, as was shown in *As You Like It*, that amount of emotion which exactly answers to the worth of the object, so in forming opinions the true estimate of the object is that which is determined by careful examination and proof, to the end that the conceptions of the mind may be made exactly to match with the reality.

And in this way only can it be fairly judged how far men's behavior and fashions comply with the standard of reason, or the true nature and "form" of man.

Whether the writer of this comedy had in his mind during its composition the antithesis between *fashion*, as equivalent to *opinion*, and *form* in its metaphysical sense, as equivalent to *truth*, will no doubt be questioned; but that the play exhibits a contrast between Opinion and false appearance on the one hand, and reason and truth on the other, can hardly be doubted by any one who will fairly examine the piece; yet the latter contrast differs from the first only in being expressed in ordinary language.

So confessedly one of doubt is the world of opinion, so imperfect is our knowledge of causes, so incomprehensible in its totality is the scheme of nature, that we entertain an habitual distrust that our best-laid plans may go astray, and therefore refer the issue of all human projects to the dominion of chance. The event alone can give assurance of success, and prove the wisdom of our schemes. In like manner, proofs and probabilities gain acceptance just so far as they accord with what experience teaches us is the uniform sequence of nature, or the usual current of events. This is called in the play "the *frame* of nature," and is the background to the world of fashion, custom, and conventionalism therein depicted. Of this "frame of nature," human nature in its simplicity and truth is a part, and in the play particularly appears in those cries of grief and pain, those spontaneous utterances and outbreaks of indignation, — in short, that voice of nature which follows the heinous calumny against Hero, whose family and



friends at once drop all compliment and ceremony, and stand ready with hand and sword to avenge the insult.

On the side of the inanimate world, also, this "frame of nature" or arrangement of things appears in the accidental interposition of trifling events that are decisive of the gravest matters, as in the chance which brings the Watch to overhear Borachio's confession to Conrade of his villainy, whilst they shelter themselves under "a pent-house" from a passing shower.

In the foregoing remarks upon some of the causes which operate in Society to mislead and pervert the judgment in the formation of opinions, will be found, it is believed, the moral and social principles which predominate in the world of Fashion (or of Opinion and False Appearances) and which underlie the characters and incidents of the piece; on which account the play is a good model or typical picture of those *idola* or false appearances, or of that condition of human knowledge spoken of by Bacon, "where the mind is, through the daily intercourse and conversation of life, occupied with unsound doctrines, and beset on all sides with vain imaginings." Preface to Nov. Org.

The argument of the play may be thus briefly stated: Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon, returning with his suite from the field, where he has gained a victory, and where Claudio, his favorite, had won great honor, stops at Messina, and becomes the guest of Leonato, the governor of the city. Hospitalities and entertainments follow, during which a match between Claudio and Hero, Leonato's daughter, is brought about by the influence of the Prince, who also contrives a match between Benedict, one of the gentlemen of his train, and Beatrice, Leonato's niece. This couple are habitual satirists of love and marriage, and much sport is anticipated from their change of opinion on this subject when both the gentleman and lady shall have been persuaded through a skillful working upon their pride and vanity to believe that each entertains for the other a consuming though secret passion, which neither will reveal through fear of the ridicule it will excite. This stratagem is successful, but Don John, a bastard brother of the Prince, who has a secret grudge against Claudio for having supplanted him in the favor of his brother, counterplots in order to break up the match between him and Hero, and to that end causes the Prince and Claudio to witness an interview at midnight between Borachio, one of his servants, and a counter-



feit Hero, who in fact is Margaret, an attendant on Hero, and who, through the favor Borachio enjoys with her, is persuaded by him to personate her mistress, and in her name address him as her lover. The Prince and Claudio are deceived by this artifice, and, enraged at what they consider an attempt upon their honor in palming off a worthless woman as a bride, resolve to expose her the next day in the church at the time of the nuptial ceremony. This plan they carry out, and in a moment the gay and joyous company, who had been all smiles and courtesy to each other, drop the affectations and insipidities of society, and words of native passion leap from their hearts. Hero swoons, the Prince and Claudio retire, all is grief and rage, when the Friar, who was present to perform the ceremony, having watched Hero, and being persuaded of her innocence by her changes of color and other proofs, suggests the plan of reporting her death, and of performing a mock funeral, which, he alleges, will work a change in the feelings of Claudio, and at any rate will disarm disapprobation. At this juncture, the City Watch patrolling the streets, chance to overhear Borachio confessing to a comrade the villainy he had perpetrated, and they thereupon arrest him. This leads to a recognition and proof of Hero's innocence, and all at last ends happily.

Wit is the staple of which this comedy is wrought, and gossip, news-telling, and tale-bearing are the motive powers of the piece. The plot is carried forward wholly by hearsay; that is, by conversations that are overheard and repeated and taken at second-hand. The brief conference of the Prince and Claudio with regard to the latter's suit to Hero is overheard both by Antonio and Borachio, and repeated by the one to Leonato, by the other to Don John; the wooing of Hero by the Prince is overheard and repeated to Claudio; Benedict and Beatrice are both entangled in the plot laid for them by overhearing the opinions of others respecting themselves and their mutual liking; Claudio and the Prince are led to condemn Hero by overhearing the conversation between Margaret and Borachio; and the Watch overhears the villain's confession of the stratagem, which leads to Hero's vindication, and the *éclaircissement* of all difficulties. So, too, the estimates the characters place upon each other are made up from rumors, tales, and gossip. It is thus apparent that the opinions and actions of the characters are determined by proofs of the most loose and superficial kind.

The dialogue of the piece is for the first three acts a light and sparkling conversation, composed of jest, raillery, and badinage. By witty disparagement, or good-natured personalities, the characters seek to put the laugh upon one another, or they discuss the social merits of acquaintances, or they devise love-matches, or their talk is of the fashion of apparel, of rabatos and headtires, and, in Margaret's phrase, of "gowns of cloth of gold, set with pearls, down sleeves, side sleeves and skirts under-borne round with a bluish tinsel." With the exception of the last two acts, in which the characters leave the world of Fashion and frivolity and reënter, so to speak, the world of serious feeling, the play is a warfare of words and skirmishes of wit, a rattling fire of jests, retorts, and repartees, for which the best occasion is offered in the banquets and festivities given by Leonato for the entertainment of Don Pedro and his suite.

As for the characters, they are high-bred and fashionable gentlemen and ladies, accustomed to the habits and manners of artificial life, according to the style of three centuries ago. In their speech and mental associations they all bear a social stamp. The gentlemen, though they "will lie awake ten nights to carve the fashion of a doublet," are neither excessive fops nor much of coxcombs; they are of a higher type than the modern beau, although a distinguished military authority has said that the dandies fight amazingly well when put to it. In Elizabeth's time fashion could boast among its votaries a Raleigh and a Sidney, and the young gallants of this play are soldiers who have returned from a victorious field in which they have done manly service. They now give themselves up to recreation and seem to exist only for enjoyment. They are young, gay, brave, careless, good-humored, and witty, — in which last respect the ladies, especially Beatrice, are fully a match for them. Their obedience to form, their subserviency to opinion and fashion, their habit of living for the approbation of others, for pride and self-love, have rendered their views of life and even their sentiments conventional; with them love has little fervor and no romance, and marriage is not so much an affair of the heart as an alliance of family to be brought about by intrigue and influence. Claudio, the favorite of the Prince, affects a liking for Hero, the daughter of Leonato, but, with that deference to opinion which necessarily prevails in a society in which individuals live more for others than for them-



selves, he is desirous of sustaining his own preference by the favorable regard of others, and he therefore asks Benedict what he thinks of the lady; that gentleman, out of a habit of banter, ridicules the choice and professes himself unable to see in the lady any merit whatever, and, in order to gain still more mirth out of the matter, at once communicates the secret to the Prince, that he may join in the raillery. The Prince, however, promises his influence to the lover, but he, prudent man, is first careful to inquire how far the lady is likely to prove a good match by being heir to Leonato.

*“Claud. Has Leonato any son, my lord?”*

*D. Pedro. No child but Hero: she’s his only heir.*

*Dost thou affect her, Claudio?”*

Upon receiving an affirmative reply the Prince, without hesitation, promises the lady to him, though it is manifest that neither herself nor her family had ever been apprised of Claudio’s intentions toward her.

*“Prince. If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,*

*And I will break with her and with her father,*

*And thou shalt have her.”*

And it is thereupon arranged that at a masquerade that night the Prince should assume the part of Claudio and woo the lady for him. The passage is a good instance of the formation of a plan, to be followed by immediate practice.

*“D. Pedro. I will assume thy part in some disguise,*

*And tell fair Hero I am Claudio;*

*And in her bosom I’ll unclasp my heart*

*And take her hearing prisoner with the force*

*And strong encounter of my amorous tale;*

*Then after to her father will I break;*

*And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.*

*In practice let us put it presently.”*

This conversation, which takes place in the street before Leonato’s house, is overheard; and it is a good illustration of the rumors that pervade Society and shape the course of the actors in it, that the news of the Prince’s intention is carried almost simultaneously though in different versions, one to the family of the lady, the other to Don John.

The story, as repeated to Leonato, runs as follows:—

*“Antonio. Brother, I can tell you news that you yet dream not of.*

*Leonato. Are they good?”*



*Ant.* As the event stamps them ; but they have a good cover ; they show well outward. The Prince and Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley, in my orchard, were thus overheard by a man of mine : The Prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece, your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance ; and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top and instantly break with you of it.

*Leon.* Hath the fellow any wit that told you this ?

*Ant.* A good sharp fellow," etc.

This is an instance of a story utterly false getting into circulation on seemingly good authority, and is a piece of most deceptive hearsay evidence. Leonato in his joy can hardly credit the good fortune that is to befall his house, but still "will acquaint his daughter withal that she *may be the better prepared for an answer*, if peradventure this be true."

The other version of the story is carried to Don John : —

"*Borachio.* Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the Prince and Claudio, hand in hand, in sad conference : I whipt behind the arras, and there heard it agreed upon that the *Prince should woo Hero for himself*, and having obtained her give her to Count Claudio."

It seems that Borachio having somewhere picked up the story (a false version, however) diversifies it with circumstances that are evidently framed in his own head.

Don John, a morose villain, takes some pleasure in this intelligence, as he hopes it will furnish "*a model* to build mischief on."

The preconcerted plan is carried out ; the Prince woos in Claudio's name and is accepted, of course, by Hero, who had been prepared with an answer in a family consultation ; immediately after the Prince obtains Leonato's consent that Claudio marry his daughter, all is satisfactory to all concerned, and the affair is settled with the least possible expenditure of sentiment. True, Don John, overhearing his brother's suit to Hero, maliciously tells Claudio that Don Pedro had sworn his affection to Hero ; a story that Borachio improves upon by saying that Don Pedro had sworn "that he would marry her that night," whereupon Claudio experiences a mild attack of jealousy, sufficient, however, to furnish a theme for ridicule to Benedict, who also hears and repeats the same rumor. Nor is Benedict in the least surprised that the Prince, as he says, "had stolen the bird's nest," which the other had shown him, nor does he evince the least sympathy with the forsaken lover except to offer to accompany him to the conventional "willow," in order to secure the necessary garland.

*Bene.* Count Claudio ?

*Claud.* Yea, the same.

*Bene.* Come, will you go with me ?

*Claud.* Whither ?

*Bene.* Even to the next willow, about your own business, Count ? What fashion will you wear the garland of ? About your neck, like an usurer's chain ? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf ? You must wear it one way, for the Prince hath got your Hero.

*Claud.* I wish him joy of her.

*Bene.* Why, that's spoken like an honest drover ; so they sell bullocks. But did you think the Prince would have served you thus ?

Claudio himself comments on what he is led to think has been the Prince's want of faith.

" 'Tis certain so ; the Prince woos for himself.  
Friendship is constant in all other things  
Save in the office and affairs of love :  
Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues :  
Let every eye negotiate for itself,  
And trust no agent : for beauty is a witch  
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.  
This is an accident of hourly proof,  
Which I mistrusted not."

Here is seen the thoroughly worldly habit of mind, which looks upon human intercourse as governed, notwithstanding its fine speeches, by policy and self-love ; and Claudio rather blames himself for his own simplicity than the Prince for proving false under the temptation of beauty.

This disturbance of the harmony of the parties, however, is but momentary ; the truth soon comes out ; and the following is the business-like style in which the match is concluded :—

*"D. Pedro.* Here, Claudio, I have woo'd in thy name, and fair Hero is won ; I have broke with her father and his good will obtained : name the day of marriage and God give thee joy !

*Leon.* Count, take of me my daughter and with her my fortunes ; his grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it !"

Discourse or conversation has brilliant representatives in Beatrice, a niece of Leonato, and Benedict, a gentleman in the suite of the Prince. Beatrice displays the spirit of aristocratic Society ; its pride, disdain, and heartless ridicule ; while in Benedict there is more pleasantry and disposition to amuse. They are both gifted with inexhaustible wit, though different in kind and modified by their dispositions respectively ; Beatrice delighting



to indulge her great quickness of apprehension in cutting gibes and sarcasms, and Benedict, of more genial temper and more humorous fancy, reveling in images so ludicrous that their very hyperbole proves how little real bitterness there is in his sallies. Beatrice is witty because, conscious of her powers, she is proud to exhibit them and make them felt; but Benedict is witty because, being naturally a humorist, his thoughts always flow in a witty channel. He is as brilliant in soliloquy as when calling up his powers to entertain his companions or cope with them in repartee. They are both sworn foes to love and matrimony; Benedict professes himself "a tyrant to the sex," and congratulates himself on his bachelorhood, and Beatrice, on her side, mocks all her wooers out of suit. She had rather, she says, "hear her dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves her." They never meet without a sharp encounter, in which, besides expressing mutual disdain, they give free play to their scorn for all tenderness of sentiment generally. In the opinion of each, there is not one of the opposite sex that is worthy of love or trust. But these opinions are held by them through mere force of will; they rest on no proof nor experience nor conviction. It is in this point they become impersonations of false opinion and a departure from the true standard of reason, occasioned by pride of wit and the railing spirit of Society. Without love and marriage, Society would lose its elegance, its charm, its endeavor to please. To deride them is an abuse of wit, a perversion of ridicule, which is itself the fittest theme of ridicule. Benedict and Beatrice are the exponents of this error and the mark at which the satire of the play is aimed.

Both gentleman and lady, under their affectation, vanity, and assumed opinions, possess strong and earnest natures, but their "wit values itself so highly that to them all matters else seem weak."

Benedict's habitual disparagement of women awakens all the disdain and derision of Beatrice, who, both for the honor of her sex and her love of sarcasm, pursues him with such unsparing gibes that he flies her presence. He cannot endure, he says, "my Lady Tongue." And he takes occasion to describe her malice and temper with a lavish outpouring of satirical humor.

"O, she misused me past the endurance of a block: an oak, with but one green leaf on it, would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her: She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I



was the Prince's jester, and that I was duller than a great thaw ; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me : She speaks poniards and every word stabs : if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her ; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed ; she would have made Hercules have turned spit ; yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her ; you shall find her the infernal Até in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would conjure her ; for, certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary ; and people sin upon purpose because they would go thither ; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her."

This is clearly the indulgence by a wit of his faculty quite as much with the intent to amuse as to vent his spite. Admirers of wit as they are, they cannot but admire each other, but stung with each other's sarcasms, they mistake this play and fence of mind for expressions of real aversion, and remain insensible to one another's sterling good qualities.

Yet notwithstanding they hold the whole world in scorn, this bright and astute pair are exposed to attack through their self-admiration, and upon this foible their friends play in order to work a change in their sentiments. The chief diversion afforded by the piece and one of the main illustrations of the influence of hearsay proof upon the formation of opinion are derived from a plan devised by the Prince to bring about a love-match between these two apparently incorrigible scoffers at love and marriage, and thus render them the "argument of their own scorn." This is obviously in accordance with the idea of a "discourse," which is, by proof, to form opinion and determine conduct. And in the case of Benedict and Beatrice, it is effected by each being adroitly made to overhear a "fictitious dialogue," from which, as hearsay evidence, they each learn that the other, under the guise of disdain or indifference, conceals a most desperate passion, which, however, neither the sufferer nor the sufferer's friends will permit to be revealed on account of the proud and contemptuous spirit with which it is sure to be met. And the sport the plotters anticipate is to be found in "the dumb show" to which these indefatigable talkers will be reduced when they hold "an opinion of one another's dotage *and no such matter.*"

This double attack upon vanity and pride, coupled with what both gentleman and lady take for unquestionable proof of the

other's sentiments, is entirely successful ; Benedict concludes at once that "the world must be peopled" and that he ought to marry ; and Beatrice, sinking her pride of wit in ingenuous shame at hearing herself so censured, determines to see in Benedict more than she can learn from hearsay.

"For others say thou dost deserve, and I  
Believe it better than reportingly."

These scenes are certainly good instances of those "actual types and models" which Bacon describes as the subject matter of the Fourth and Fifth Parts of his *Instauration* and as means by which the *entire process of the mind* and the *whole fabric and order of invention* . . . should be *set*, as it were, *before the eyes*.

For the influence over the mind of opinion and mere hearsay evidence, received without being put to any test, can surely be never set forth in a more apposite and striking "type and model" than in the case of Benedict and Beatrice, who are made to overhear certain testimony, which, however, is entirely unsupported by facts, but which causes these sharp and quick-witted people to change their cherished opinions and alter their whole course of life.

In the exercise of judgment, the mind cannot escape being biased "by an infusion of the will and affections," so that instead of guiding the will it is more frequently bent by the will to its own wishes. As Bacon puts it (treating of *idola*), "The human understanding is no dry light, but receives an infusion from the will and affections, whence proceed sciences which may be called 'sciences as one would.' For what a man had rather were true, he more readily believes" (Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 49). Therefore in addition to the various disturbing causes already mentioned that deflect the judgment, such as feeling, interest, prejudice, imagination, there may be also taken whim, willfulness, and pride of opinion, — of which last Benedict is a noted example. He does not hold to his "simple true judgment," but affects an opinion and cultivates a custom of disparaging women. He willfully assumes that all womankind is to be distrusted, and says that "this opinion fire cannot melt out of him ; he will die in it at the stake." But the Prince, who knows men and knows also how readily opinions yield to self-love or interest, tells him that "he will temporise with the hours ;" and that though "he is an obstinate heretic in despite of beauty," he cannot "maintain his part *but in the force of his will*." As soon therefore as, by the



device of the Prince, Benedict's sentiments are attacked through his pride and vanity, this "obstinate heretic" drops his opinions, turns completely round, and becomes the argument of his own ridicule. This is but an exemplification of those *idola*, those illusions and willful opinions that beset the mind, but which, resting on no solid reasons, are ever ready to shift at the bidding of feeling or even of whim. Another instance where the will is made to stand for argument may be cited in the case of even the gentle Hero. She is discussing with her attendant, Margaret, the all important point of the most becoming wedding-attire. Margaret says: —

"I think your *other rabato* were better.

*Hero.* No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

*Marg.* By my troth, *it is not so good* ; and I warrant your cousin will say so.

*Hero.* My *cousin is a fool* and *thou art another* ;  
*I'll wear none but this."*

The Prince is a fine character. Bred in a Court and well acquainted with those types of character that Court life fosters, he yet has retained his simplicity and is a kind and courteous gentleman; he has abundant wit which always aims at mirth and never at sarcasm, but, like the others, he adopts opinions without due inquiry, and is therefore led into great wrong towards Hero. He thus speaks his conviction to Leonato.

"My heart is sorry for your daughter's death.

But on my honour, she was charg'd with nothing

But *what was true and very full of proof."*

In his case the error arises mainly from the deceit of the senses; he mistakes in the imperfect light Margaret for Hero.

Amid all the volubility and wit of this comedy, two foils are introduced, — one the taciturn and sullen villain Don John, who describes himself as "*not of many words*," and the other Dogberry, who, lacking no words, would, on the contrary, be grievously tautological were it not that his confusion both of thought and language reduces all he says to self-contradiction. Dogberry and "his ancient and quiet watch" are the ideal of circumlocution, the sublime of official blundering, the true growth of a long settled order of things. The substitution of artificial customs and manners for nature, which obtains among the votaries of Fashion, receives the directest and fullest expression in Dogberry's comments upon the qualifications of worthy George Seacoal for constable.



"Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. *God hath given you a good name ; to be a well-favoured man is the gift of Fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.*"

Dogberry, moreover, puts before us distinctly the great prevalence of scandalous reports and rumors in society.

"*D. Pedro.* Officer, what offence have these men committed ?

*Dogb.* Marry, sir, they have committed false report ; moreover, they have spoken untruths ; secondarily, they are slanders ; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady ; thirdly, they have verified unjust things ; and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

*D. Pedro.* First, I ask thee what they have done ; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence ; sixth and lastly, why are they committed ; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge ?

*Claud.* *Rightly reasoned, and in his own division."*

This parody of the "divisions" of a "discourse" is obviously in keeping with the *idea* of the play.

Dogberry, whose opaque understanding is the foil to the keen wit of the others, is himself the one inextinguishable joke of the play. He is the negative of wit. Any analysis of his character would be, indeed, superfluous, but it may be noted that his regard for appearances and externals, and the importance he attaches to trifles, render him a representative man, the product of an old and fixed system of things, in which abuses have grown hoary and in which only fashion and state and ancientry can flourish in full perfection. Noteworthy, too, are the artistic skill and scientific accuracy with which the poet harmonizes this humorous compound of ignorance and self-complacency with the general tone of his play. For, if we look closely, we shall detect the same principle at work, though conversely, in the blunders of Dogberry, that is seen in the finest flashes of Benedict or Beatrice. Wit is usually defined as a perception of likeness in things dissimilar, which, by its unexpectedness, excites surprise and consequent pleasure. Wit brings together and matches things not ordinarily connected, by some ludicrous or fanciful resemblance it affects for the moment to find between them ; and this connection or matching may be made either by thoughts or words. Now this is what Dogberry is constantly, though unconsciously, doing. He uses terms to denote one and the same thing, which are, in fact, directly contradictory of each other. He thus, by sheer blundering, effects or rather enables the reader to effect or perceive an identity in opposites, the identity being in the thought and the opposition in the words. Thus, if a quotation may be permitted,

he instructs the Watch to "make no noise in the streets, for, for the watch *to babble and talk* is most *tolerable*, and *not to be endured*." Here the reader finds an identity in the contradictory words by perceiving that Dogberry uses them for one and the same thing.

Another instance may be given as illustrative of contradiction in the thought.

"If you meet a thief, you may suspect him by *virtue of your office* to be no true man : for such kind of men the *less you make or meddle with them* why the *more for your honesty*."

Here the contradiction arises clearly between what should be the conduct of a private citizen in avoiding the company of a thief and that of the same person as an officer of the law ; and these contradictory notions are brought into identity through the confusion of mind that is unable to distinguish between them. Such blundering applications of contradictory words to one identical thing are the direct reverse of a pun, which applies the same word or succession of syllables to contrary things. But according to logicians, a pun is a species of syllogism, — a fallacy, to use scholastic language, — founded on the equivocation of the middle term. In like manner, perhaps, Dogberry's blunders may be regarded as negative wit, the opposite pole, intellectually, of that quick apprehension that couples dissimilar objects or thoughts by some remote resemblance of a ludicrous or fanciful kind, and, in fact, they produce a like pleasant surprise, and move our laughter on the same principle that wit does.

Dogberry's statement of his standing in society, in vindication of himself against the irreverent charge of Conrade that he was "an ass," presents too superlative a summary of his qualities mental and moral, and exhibits a character too firmly wedged and mortised into the social structure and fixed order of things to be overpassed without quotation. It is obvious that the effect depends upon the anti-climax in the *measure* of the properties he gives himself.

"I am a *wise fellow* ; and, which is *more*, an *officer* ; and, which is *more*, a *householder* ; and, which is *more*, as *pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina* ; and one that *knows the law*, go to ; and a *rich fellow enough*, go to ; and a *fellow that hath had losses* ; and one that hath *two gowns* and *every thing handsome about him*. Bring him away. O, that I had been writ down an ass."



Though all the talkative and witty people in this play are constantly engaged in saying sharp things to and about each other, yet the silent Don John says the sharpest thing of all, for his disparagement, malicious and not merry, almost kills an innocent lady. Don John, in contrast with the votaries of mode and fashion around him, is a non-conformist. He will not "fashion his carriage to rob love from any." He says:—

"I can not hide what I am : I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man's jests ; eat when I have stomach and wait for no man's leisure ; sleep when I am drowsy and tend on no man's business ; laugh when I am merry and claw no man in his humour."

Such is his theory of selfish and unsocial independence, and of course he is a foil to that cast of character which conforms to a common standard. At the same time his character is as much opposed to the true and sympathetic nature of man as it is to the complaisance of artificial life.

Right thinking is the basis of right acting ; but we cannot think rightly unless we see clearly, for, as Bacon says, "all depends upon keeping the eye steadily fixed upon the facts of nature, and so receiving their images simply as they are" (Plan of Work). And hence the necessity of great caution in judging by appearances, as is particularly exemplified in Don John's plot to break up the match between Claudio and Hero. Don John had said that "any *bar*, any *cross*, any *impediment*" to their marriage "would be medicinal to him," and Borachio, his servant, "whose spirits," like his master's, "toil in frame of villainies," suggests that Don John accuse Hero to the Prince and Claudio of disloyalty, adding:—

"They will hardly believe this *without trial* ; offer *them instances* ; which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window ; hear me call Margaret, Hero ; hear Margaret term me Borachio ; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding ; for, in the mean time, I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent, etc.

*D. John.* Grow this to *what adverse issue it can*, I will *put it in practice*."

And the following narrative, made by the villain to a comrade after drinking too much (the name *Borachio*, in the Italian, signifies "a bottle"), is descriptive of the manner he carried out the project:—

"Know, that I have to-night woo'd Margaret, the lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero ; she leans me out of her mistress' chamber-window,



bids me a thousand times good-night, — I tell this tale vilely : — I should first tell thee how the Prince, Claudio and my master, planted, and placed, and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

*Con.* And thought they Margaret was Hero ?

*Bor.* Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio, but the devil my master knew she was Margaret ; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged," etc.

This plot, which consists of assertions, upheld by oaths and seeming proofs, is entirely analogous to "a discourse."

In this comedy, love as a passion has no place and exhibits no generosity of sentiment. The mutual preference of Claudio and Hero involves no breaking of hearts, and would never tempt either of them to violate social decorum and usage. It rests on pride, and could not exist without the approbation of others. Therefore it is pride only that is injured by the slanders of Don John ; there is hardly a trace to be discovered in either of them of wounded affection. Claudio's conduct towards Hero is heartless and inconsiderate, and evidently is due to an ebullition of wounded pride. So, too, Beatrice's pride blazes high and fierce at the insult offered her kinswoman, and, dropping all empty talk, insists upon her lover "killing Claudio," whilst the old Leonato is almost frantic with shame at the disgrace put upon his house. In these scenes nature reasserts herself and breaks through the fetters of ceremony and custom ; polite and courteous phrases are forgotten ; banter and the jest are silent, and words that speak the genuine passions of the soul leap from the lips of the injured parties.

Out of a desire to maintain opinions and persuade others grows the Art of Rhetoric, which art is a branch of the more general doctrine of The Transmission of Knowledge, according to the Baconian division of the sciences. *Much Ado* is a play which is a dramatic "discourse," of which the business of the characters is to mould each other's opinions. It must be borne in mind, however, that the writing of this comedy antedates any known work of Bacon's in which he sets forth scientifically, with division and subdivision, his tenets on that branch of logical art, which, as he says, "includes all the arts that relate to *words and discourse*," and which he styles "*the transmission of knowledge* ;" yet the resemblances which the play affords to such tenets are

hardly less particular and specific than if the play-writer had had the doctrine formulated before him.

But first, we may observe the influence of this notion of the *transmission* of knowledge upon the action and movement of the piece, which both opens and closes with the introduction of important news brought by a *Messenger*; while messages and errands frequently occur among the *dramatis personæ* throughout the play; even Benedict and Beatrice are sent with messages.

Bacon's Art of Transmission is divided into the Organ, the Method, and the Adornment or Illustration of Discourse.

This latter comprises Rhetoric, an art "which handleth reason as it is planted in *popular opinions and manners*." *Advancement*, p. 300.

Of Rhetoric, Bacon remarks that "it has been excellently well laboured," and that he has no deficiencies to note "in the rules and use of the art itself;" but inasmuch as he does not set forth these rules, we must go for them to other treatises, and there being none more celebrated than that of Aristotle, that author will be here followed.

"Reasonings are derived from four sources, and these four are probability, example, proof positive, and signs." *Aris. Rhet. Book II. ch. xxv.*

These four sources of reasoning are exemplified in the play. Of proof by *signs*, and of the world's easy fashion of judging in an off-hand way from appearances, there is a good instance in the raillery with which the Prince and Claudio prove Benedict in love.

*Claudio.* If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing in *old signs*. He brushes his hat o' mornings: What should that bode?

*D. Pedro.* Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

*Claud.* No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him; and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuff'd tennis-balls.

*Leon.* Indeed, he looks younger than he did by the loss of a beard.

*D. Pedro.* Nay, he rubs himself with civet: Can you smell him out by that?

*Claud.* That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

*D. Pedro.* The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

*Claud.* And when was he wont to wash his face?

*D. Pedro.* Yea, or to paint himself? for the which I know what they say of him.

*Claud.* Nay, but his jesting spirit, which has now crept into a lute-string, and now governed by stops.

*D. Pedro.* Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him. *Conclude* he is in love.

Act III. Sc. 2.

The evidence of the senses which the Prince and Claudio have, or think they have, of Hero's guilt from witnessing the interview between her, as they suppose, and Borachio, may stand for an instance of "*proof positive*." The Prince tells Leonato:—

"I am sorry you must hear: Upon mine honour  
Myself, my brother, and this griev'd Count  
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night  
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window," etc.

Act IV. Sc. 1.

With respect to arguments from *example*, Aristotle observes:—

"Reasonings drawn by inference from similarity of circumstances, whether in one or more instances, exist by virtue of example," and they are answered by showing "that in a majority of instances, and those of more frequent occurrence, the case is otherwise. If, however, it be the case more frequently, and in the majority of instances, we must contend that *the present is not the case in point*, or that *its application is not in point*, or that it has some difference at all events." Aris. Rhet. Book II. ch. xxv.

By this rule, Benedict answers the argument from example adduced by Beatrice, that is, by showing that "the present is not the case in point:"—

"Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession: there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that liv'd in the time of good neighbours: [*i. e.* when the world, not being envious, would give merit its due meed of praise, and not force it to praise itself:] if a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monuments, than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Question? Why, an hour in clamour and a quarter in rheum: Therefore, it is most expedient for the wise (if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary) to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself." Act V. Sc. 2.

Of arguments and inferences drawn from *probabilities*, the play is replete, it being cast in the very region of probable opinion. Instances need not be given, as passages containing them will be cited for other purposes.

All the principal personages of the piece, moreover, have their



plans, which they carry out by working upon the minds of others by discourse and proofs or other means of persuasion; and to do this is to practice the art of rhetoric.

The plan of the Prince to obtain Hero in marriage for Claudio, by wooing her in his name, and taking

“Her hearing prisoner with the force  
And strong encounter of his amorous tale,”

has been adverted to; as has also that for effecting a match between Benedict and Beatrice by means of proofs that persuade them of each other's affection.

Beatrice, also, has her plan; it is one for obtaining revenge for the insult offered Hero and her friends. No sooner has Benedict avowed his love than she seizes the opportunity of insisting upon his proving his sincerity by “killing Claudio.” The vehemency of her assertions which she substitutes for proofs, as well as her taunts upon his unreadiness to prove his love by acts, force upon Benedict the opinion that Claudio has been guilty of an unpardonable outrage, and under this impression he consents to seek his life.

“*Beat.* You dare easier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

*Bene.* Is Claudio thine enemy?”

And so on to the end of the scene (Act IV. Sc. 1). The passage is a clear case of the influence of discourse; it is an example of persuasion, through the importunity of passion, and falls legitimately within the province of rhetoric.

Essentially rhetorical also is Leonato's plan for vindicating the fair name of Hero, and disabusing the public mind of Messina of the opinions formed against her. He says to the Prince and Claudio:—

“You cannot bid my daughter live again,  
That were impossible; but I pray you both,  
*Possess the people in Messina here*  
*How innocent she died*; and, if your love  
*Can labour, aught in sad invention,*  
*Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,*  
*And sing it to her bones: sing it to-night.”*

This expiatory offering they make; they recite an ode and sing a dirge at Hero's tomb, but with so perfunctory a manner that it seems but empty ceremony, mere rhetoric, yet is on that account in strict unison with the conventional tone of the piece.

The Friar also has his plan of bringing about a change in the mind of Claudio. Having watched the workings of nature in Hero, having marked

“A thousand blushing apparitions start  
Into her face ; a thousand innocent shames  
In angel whiteness bear away those blushes,”

he sees in them proofs of the innocence of her soul. He is one who builds his opinion upon study and observation. He says : —

“Trust not my age,  
Trust not <sup>my</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>reading</sup> nor *my observations*,  
*Which with experimental seal do warrant*  
*The tenour of my book. . . .*  
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here  
Under some biting error.”

Act IV. Sc. 1.

Thus he is a true Baconian, and adopts no dogma nor conclusion until he has put it to the test of experiment or direct observation. He is well aware of the influence of feeling over opinion, and that the imagination enhances the value of what we have lost by investing it with a beauty it did not own whilst in possession ; and he proposes to Leonato to use this principle to work upon the mind of Claudio by reporting Hero as having died under his accusation. He makes this argument : —

“She dying, as it must be so maintain’d  
Upon the instant that she was accus’d,  
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excus’d,  
Of every hearer ; For it so falls out,  
That what we have we prize not to the worth  
Whiles we enjoy it ; but being lack’d and lost,  
Why, then we rack the value, then we find  
The virtue that possession would not show us  
Whiles it was ours : So will it fare with Claudio :  
When he shall hear she died upon his words,  
*The idea of her life shall sweetly creep*  
*Into his study of imagination ;*  
*And every lovely organ of her life*  
*Shall come apparell’d in more precious habit,*  
*More moving-delicate and full of life*  
*Into the eye and prospect of his soul*  
*Than when she liv’d indeed : — then shall he mourn*  
And wish he had not so accus’d her ;  
No, though he thought his accusation true.

Let this be so, and *doubt not but success*  
*Will fashion the event in better shape*  
*Than I can lay it down in likelihood,"* etc.

Act IV. Sc. 1.

This is clearly an argument based on probabilities, and is, moreover, a beautiful description of the deviation from truth which takes place in our mental patterns of things under the influence of feeling and imagination, thus leading to error, and converting *ideas* into *idola*.

"Numberless, in short," says Bacon, speaking of idols, "are the ways, and sometimes imperceptible, in which the affections colour and infect the understanding." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 49.

In the ordinary exchange of opinions, almost all reasoning rests on probabilities, while the wish to excel in argument originates *dialectic* or the art of *conversational disputation*, which, as a special province of Rhetoric, is included under the *transmission of knowledge*.

The dialogue of the play consists of opinions and objections stated by way of question and answer, and also of skirmishes of wit that owe all their effect to the argumentation, which, whether in jest or earnest, they carry forward. There are passages, also, that may be taken as direct examples of the rules laid down for dialectical reasoning, which, according to Aristotle, looks to four sources for the construction of syllogisms: —

1. Probable propositions that may be assumed in an argument.
2. Distinction of the equivocal; or of words that are nearly of the same signification.
3. Discovery of differences; or distinction of things which might be mistaken for one and the same.
4. Similitudes.

Of the first of these, or of an argument made by the assumption of a proposition, the following is an example, in which a proverb or old saying is assumed as a premise: —

"*Leon.* By my troth, niece, thou *will never get thee a husband* if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

*Ant.* In faith, she's *too curst*.

*Beat.* Too curst is more than curst: I shall lessen God's sending that way: for it is said, '*God sends a curst cow short horns*,' but to a cow *too curst* he sends *none*.

*Leon.* So by being *too curst* God will send you *no horns*.

*Beat.* Just, if he send me no husband."



The second source of probable syllogisms is in the distinction of the equivocal; this covers the ground of "multifarious predication," or the use of ambiguous terms in reasoning. The uncertainty and ambiguity of words are put down by Bacon as among the most pernicious causes of error that darken the human understanding. He calls them the "Idols of the Market Place," because they grow out of the intercourse and conversation of men. And the dramatist had evidently given great attention to the same subject, as there is scarce one among his plays in which words, their uses, abuses, natures, and qualities do not receive some special exemplification. In this play, they are regarded with reference to their ambiguity *as predicates*, offering the disputant a choice of meanings as may best suit his purpose.

Take the following, in which Beatrice "trans-shapes" Don Pedro's "predicates" in favor of Benedict into terms of disparagement:—

"*D. Pedro.* I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day: I said, thou hadst a *fine* wit; 'True,' says she, 'a fine *little* one;' 'No,' said I, 'a great wit;' 'Right,' says she, 'a great *gross* one;' 'Nay,' said I, 'a good wit;' 'Just,' said she, 'it *hurts nobody*;' 'Nay,' said I, 'the gentleman is wise;' 'Certain,' said she, 'a *wise* gentleman;' 'Nay,' said I, 'he hath the tongues;' 'That I believe,' said she, 'for he swore a thing to me on Monday night which he forswore on Tuesday morning; there's a *double* tongue; there's *two* tongues.' Thus did she, an hour together, trans-shape thy particular virtues," etc.

The piece largely exemplifies this source of error, and makes direct mention of it as causing intentional error through force of wit, as thus:—

"*Beat.* Let me go with that I came for, which is with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

*Bene.* Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee.

*Beat.* Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart un-kissed.

*Bene.* Thou hast *frighted the word out of its right sense, so forcible is thy wit.*"

Beatrice avails herself of an ambiguity even in the sound of words.

"*Messenger.* And a good soldier, too, lady.

*Beat.* And a good soldier to a lady! But what is he to a lord?" etc.

The third source is "the discovery of differences, or distinction of things which might be mistaken for one and the same."

By making a distinction between things to all appearance the

same — the blush of guilt and the blush of modesty — Claudio derives an argument to justify his intolerable wrong towards Hero.

“*Claud.* She’s but the sign and semblance of her honour.

Behold, *how like a maid she blushes here :*

*O, what authority and show of truth*

*Can cunning sin cover itself withal !*

*Comes not that blood as modest evidence*

*To witness simple virtue ? Would you not swear,*

*All you that see her, that she were a maid*

*By these exterior shows ? But she is none :*

*Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.”*

Under the fourth head, “similitude,” falls the consideration of the similar and comparative excellence of such things as offer resemblances, and also the topic that that which is nearer in resemblance to the best is better than that which is less so ; as Ajax is better than Ulysses, because Ajax resembled Achilles, while Ulysses resembled only Nestor ; but there may be an objection to this, for *mind is superior to body*, and if Ajax resembled *Achilles only in body*, while Ulysses resembled *Nestor in wisdom*, it would reverse their comparative excellence. *Vide* Aris. Topics, Book III. ch. ii.

This topic gives to Claudio a form of argument wherewith to prove Benedict’s folly in challenging him.

“*Don Pedro.* He is in earnest.

*Claudio.* In most profound earnest, and I’ll warrant you for the love of Beatrice.

*D. Pedro.* And has challenged thee ?

*Claud.* Most sincerely.

*D. Pedro.* What a pretty thing a man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit !

*Claud.* He is then a giant to an ape, but then an ape is a doctor to such a man.”

Observe, also, that here the reason (or *wit*), as “the specific difference,” is directly taken as the true measure of the man.

Another branch of the Art of Transmission is the *Method of Transmission*, of which Bacon enumerates several different kinds ; the leading one of which (termed by him the Magistral, because it teaches authoritatively, without stopping to prove) naturally accompanies the usual and popular way of gathering knowledge ; for just in the same way that men are impatient of details and inquiry, and consequently jump to conclusions, so in imparting and



receiving knowledge are they impatient of particulars, and hasten to sum up and condense the substance of what they have to say into some pithy statement, or, to use Bacon's own language, "as knowledges have hitherto been delivered, there is a kind of contract of error between the deliverer and receiver, for he who delivers knowledge desires to *deliver it in such form as may be best believed*, and *not as may be most conveniently examined*, and he who receives knowledge *desires present satisfaction without waiting for due enquiry*, and so rather not to doubt than not to err" (De Aug. Book VI. ch. ii.) ; that is, this method seeks to give the results of inquiry in such brief and condensed form as may be most easily received and readily assented to.

Men, then, being fond of short methods, the play-writer, in this representation of a world of "discourse," endows his characters with this favorite method of delivery as a *mental habit* ; for instance, the Prince, alluding to the invitation of Leonato to himself and suite, says : —

"This is the sum of all ; Leonato — Signior Claudio and Signior Benedict — my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all," etc.

Benedict, arguing the question of marriage, says : —

"Because, I will not do them [women] the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none, and the *fine is* (for the which I may go the finer), I will live a bachelor."

In the following lines prolixity is censured : —

"D. Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,  
And tire the hearer with a book of words.

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love  
That know love's grief by his complexion !  
But lest my liking might too sudden seem  
I would have *salv'd it with a longer treatise*.

D. Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood ?  
Look, *what will serve, is fit : 't is once, thou lov'st ;*  
And I will fit thee with the remedy," etc.

Ursula, at the masked ball, recognizes Antonio.

"Come, come ; do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit ? Can virtue hide itself ? Go to, mum, you are he : Graces will appear, and *there's an end*."

Don John, conferring with Borachio, —



"How canst thou cross this marriage ?

*Borachio.* Not honestly, my lord, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

*D. John.* Show me briefly how."

Benedict comments on Balthazar's singing, —

"Now is his soul ravished ! Is it not strange that sheep's guts should hale souls out of men's bodies ? Well, a *horn for my money, when all's done.*"

Don John, making his charge against Hero, —

"I came hither to tell you, and *circumstances shortened* (for she hath been too long a talking of), the lady is disloyal."

Borachio confesses, —

"The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation ; and, *briefly*, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain."

Leonato hastens the wedding ceremony, —

"Come, friar Francis, only to the *plain form of marriage*, and you shall recount the particular duties afterwards."

Benedict recants his opinions respecting matrimony, —

"*In brief*, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it ; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it ; for *man is a giddy thing and this is my conclusion.*"

There are other instances, but we will close the list with that of the boy, whom Benedict sends for a book, —

"*Bene.* In my chamber-window lies a book : bring it hither to me in the orchard," —

to which the boy, in his zeal, replies : "*I am here already, sir,*" — of course, meaning that he will go and return so quickly that his absence will not be noted. Benedict rejoins : "I know that, but I would have thee hence and here again."

The boy manifests the same haste that characterizes the more important personages of the piece.

Opposed to these characters, so impatient of all prolixity, is Dogberry, who never comes to the point, and who, upon being charged by Leonato with being "tedious," declares that if he were as "tedious as a king, he could find it in his heart to bestow it all upon his worship."

The remaining division of The Art of Transmission, *i. e.*, the *Organ of Discourse*, is "also called Grammar," and "has two

parts, one relating to speech, the other to writing, or words and letters." De Aug. Book VI. ch. 1.

Of course, in a play like *Much Ado*, which effervesces with wit, there cannot be many marked specimens of grammatical technicalities, but some allusion to such topics may, nevertheless, be found ; for instance, this of Benedict : —

"How now ! Interjections ! Why, some be of laughter, as ha, ha, he !"

Or in the following : —

"Beat. By my troth, I am exceedingly ill ; hey, ho !

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband ?

Beat. For the letter which begins them all, H."

The following, also, has a grammatical flavor : —

"Beat. For which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me ?

Bene. Suffer love ! a good epithet : I do suffer love," etc.

"To Grammar," says Bacon, "I refer, also, accidents of words, such as sound, measure, accent. The measure of words has produced a vast body of Art, namely, Poesy, considered with reference . . . to the style and form of words, that is to say, metre and verse." De Aug. Book VI. ch. 1.

In the next passage there is some commenting on the same subject. It is Benedict that speaks : —

"And a whole bookful of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and over, as my poor self, in love. Marry, I cannot shew *it in rhyme ; I have tried ;* I can find no rhyme to *lady* but *baby*, an innocent rhyme ; for *scorn, horn*, a hard rhyme ; for *school, fool*, a babbling rhyme, very ominous endings ; — no, I was not born under a rhyming planet, for I cannot woo in festival terms."

These passages are not strictly illustrative ; they are allusive only, yet they unquestionably indicate that the subject of grammar was associated in the mind of the play-writer with that philosophy of "discourse" or the Art of Transmission that finds so much exemplification in the piece ; and considering that the play was written some years before Bacon published anything about his Art of Transmission, the similitude offered by the play with the Baconian doctrine in a division of the subject so undramatic as "Grammar," argues a most subtle and surprising concurrence of views between the play-writer and philosopher.

The diction and phraseology of a Shakespearian play is the

ultimate development and growth, so to speak, of the *idea*, which, with its ramifying conceptions, constitute the main trunk and branches of the composition. In *Much Ado* this idea is, as has been shown, that of a "discourse," or the deduction of a conclusion from proof, the aim of which is to form opinions and direct conduct. In the dramatic world men and women are the only subjects of judgment, and in ordinary discourse the standard of judgment is popular opinion or the Fashion, which is satisfied with the most superficial appearances and the vaguest rumors as evidence; whereas a judgment truly formed rests on the reason, so instructed by the strictest proofs that the mental image obtained is an exact match or double of the reality. This difference between Opinion and Truth is illustrated in the play by the different estimates of men and women formed upon such proofs as are afforded by the dissimulations of fashionable life and false appearances generally, on the one hand, and that accurate knowledge, on the other, that is derived from genuine speech and behavior, proceeding from simplicity and nature. It may, therefore, be expected (if this analysis is correct) that the vocabulary of the play will contain classes of words that may be grouped under the respective heads of, among others, Discourse, Fashion, Form, which last will comprise *match* and *measure*, as being the reason or form of man, that is, the standard of judgment, and representing *truth*, on which account it is also the moral background of the piece, for a Shakespearian play is always a picture of error on a ground of truth.

Fashion is also the measure, the *mode*, from the Latin *modus*, that is, that by which anything is measured, its size, quantity, length, breadth, etc., particularly the *due and proper measure*. Cicero tells us "*suus cuique modus est*," and Beatrice tells us the same, "There is measure in everything." If we take the opening scene (a portion of which has been quoted before for another purpose) we shall see how freely this notion of measure is introduced, and at the same time mark with what ease the dialogue is made to hold in solution, as it were, the dominant conceptions of the piece.

"*Leonato.* I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

[We have here the transmission of knowledge and intelligence. Reports and hearsay are the motive powers of the piece.]



*Messenger.* He is *very near by this* ; he was not *three leagues off* when I left him.

*Leon.* How many gentlemen have you lost in this action ?

*Mess.* But few of any sort, and none of name.

*Leon.* A victory is *twice itself* when the achiever brings home *full numbers*.

[In these sentences, measure and number are the very subject of discourse.]

*Leon.* I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed *much* honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

*Mess.* Much deserved on his part and *equally* remembered by Don Pedro. [A phrase implying a match.] He hath borne himself *beyond* the promise of his age ; doing *in the figure of a lamb* the *feats of a lion* ; he hath, indeed, *better* *bettered* expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

[Still the phraseology is governed by the notion of quantity and measure ; at the same time the deceptiveness of appearances is introduced in the antithesis used to describe Claudio's valor. Under the outward "figure of a lamb" he conceals the inward "form" or essential nature of a lion. Note, too, the jingle of words in the Messenger's last speech, a premonitory symptom that ambiguity of words will hold a conspicuous place in the play.]

*Leon.* He hath an uncle here in Messina will be *very much* glad of it.

*Mess.* I have already *delivered him letters*, and there *appears much* joy in him ; *even so much* that joy could not *shew itself modest enough*, without a *badge* of bitterness.

*Leon.* Did he break into tears ?

*Mess.* In *great measure*.

[Here is another phrase implying both *match* and *measure*, and in addition we find reversed the ordinary course of metaphor, which is from the intellectual to the material, and from the conventional to the natural world. A purely natural emotion, weeping for joy, is described by a metaphor drawn from a rule of good manners, "Could not shew itself *modest enough* ;" and also from an allusion to costume, "Without a *badge* of bitterness." This is analogous to that substitution of Art for Nature, occasioned by highly artificial manners.]

*Leon.* A *kind overflow of kindness* [the rule of manners according to the reason through which men are of one kind] ; there are no faces truer than those that are so washed [an allusion to cosmetics and false appearances]. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping."

In this last antithet, the moral of the play is put before us. How much better is sympathy than ridicule, truth than fashion !

Many of the words signifying *measure* are so familiar that even the constant repetition of them escapes attention : among them are *many, much, few, little, great, every, any, all*, which last is often introduced. Terms of arithmetical measure, also, are often used.

In Act II. Sc. 1, Beatrice gives us her *idea* of a husband by telling what would exceed and what fall short of the measure.

“*Leon.* Was not Count John here at supper ?

*Ant.* I saw him not.

*Beat.* How tartly that gentleman looks ! I never see him but I am *heart-burned an hour after*.

*Hero.* He is of very melancholy disposition.

*Beat.* He were an excellent man that were made *just midway between him and Benedict* : the one is too *like an image and says nothing* ; and the other too *like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling*.

*Leon.* Then *half Signior Benedict's tongue in Count John's mouth and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedict's face* —

*Beat.* With a good leg and good foot, uncle, with money enough in his purse, *such a man* would win any woman in the world — if he could get her good-will.

*Beat.* I could not endure a husband with a beard upon his face ; I had rather lie in the woollen.

*Leon.* You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

*Beat.* What should I do with him ? dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting gentlewoman ? He that hath a beard is *more than a youth*, and he that hath no beard is *less than a man*, and he that is *more than a youth* is not for me, and he that is *less than a man*, I am not for him : Therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-ward and lead his apes into hell.”

The notion of a *match* appears in many phrases, of which the following in *italics* will suffice for examples : —

“*Beat.* Against my will, I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

*Bene.* Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

*Beat.* I took *no more pains* for those thanks *than you take pains* to thank me ; if it had been painful I would not have come.

*Bene.* You take pleasure then in the message ?

*Beat.* Yea, *just as much as you may take upon a knife's point and choke a daw withal* : You have no stomach, signior ; fare you well. [Exit.

*Bene.* Ha ! ‘Against my will, I am sent to bid you come in to dinner ;’ — there's a *double meaning* in that. ‘I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me ;’ *that's as much as to say*, Any pains I take for you is as easy as thanks.”

“His words are a very fantastical banquet — *just so many strange dishes*.”

"Can you smell him out by that? *that's as much as to say*, the sweet youth's in love."

A match is that which *answers, fits, suits*, being neither *too much* nor *too little*, but *just, even, such* and so, *like*.

In Leonato's speech (Act V. Sc. 1) the notion of *measure* and *match* is strongly put.

"Let no comforter delight mine ear  
But *such a one* whose wrongs do *suit with mine*.  
*Measure his woe* the length and breadth of mine  
And let it *answer every strain for strain* ;  
*As thus for thus* and *such a grief for such*,  
*In every lineament, branch, shape and form*  
*If such a one will smile*," etc.

This notion of a *match*, lying at the bottom of the piece as it does, — for truth of knowledge is a double or match of what is, and the "form" is the match in the mind of the external object, — decides also (and the fact may be taken as a proof of the amazing ingenuity and painstaking with which this artist caused all parts of his play to contribute to the harmony and unity of its effect) to a great extent the forms of the scenes, there being several marked instances of prominent scenes which are doubles or counterparts of one another.

Thus, Act I. Sc. 2, in which Antonio communicates to Leonato the Prince's intention of wooing Hero, is immediately followed by Scene 3, Act I., in which Borachio communicates the same news to Don John.

The scene (Act III. Sc. 1) in which Beatrice is entrapped into love for Benedict is but a counterpart of that (Act II. Sc. 3) in which Benedict is entrapped into love for Beatrice; and both are followed by soliloquies of the same tenor. In Act V. Sc. 1, Antonio vainly attempts to stop the flow of Leonato's grief, and immediately after their positions are reversed and Leonato with equal futility endeavors to moderate the passion of Antonio.

The play closes with a series of passages that are counterparts or doubles.

"Bene.	Do not you love me?	}
Beat.	Why, no; no more than reason.	
Bene.	Why, then, your uncle and the Prince and Claudio	
	Have been deceiv'd; they swore you did.	
Beat.	Do not you love me?	
Bene.	Troth, no; no more than reason.	
Beat.	Why, then, my cousin Margaret and Ursula	
	Have been deceiv'd, for they did swear you did.	



*Bene.* They swore you were almost sick for me. }

*Beat.* They swore you were well-nigh dead for me. }

*Bene.* 'Tis no matter. Then you do not love me ?

*Beat.* No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

*Leon.* Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman. }

*Claud.* And I'll be sworn upon 't, that he loves her ; }

For here's a paper written in his hand,

A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,

Fashion'd to Beatrice. }

*Hero.* And here's another,

Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,

Containing her affection unto Benedict. }

*Bene.* A miracle ! here's our hands against our hearts ! Come, I'll have thee ; but, by this light, I take thee for pity. }

*Beat.* I would not deny you, but by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion. }

*Bene.* For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee ; but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised and love my cousin. }

*Claud.* I had well hop'd thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer : which, out of question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceedingly narrow to thee." }

Words that are affined in signification with *Discourse* and *Proof* are too obvious to need enumeration. Such phrases as "Will you not eat your words?" and "You shake your head at that," belong to this class, as expressive of affirmation or denial. It may be noted that the *idea* of a play almost always strongly colors the diction of those minor passages which are thrown in as connecting links in the action of the piece, as in the following lines : —

"*Friar.* Did I not tell you she was innocent ?

*Leon.* So are the Prince and Claudio, who accus'd her

Upon the error that you heard debated.

But Margaret was in some fault for this,

Although against her will, as it appears

In the true course of all the question."

The diction contains an unusual number of words from French roots, or from the Latin through the French. In addition there are some words introduced wearing English forms with French significations, as "*proposing*" and "*propose*," from the French *propos*, *i. e.* *discourse*, talk ; advertisement (*avertissement*) in the sense of *admonition*. Others, again, are Anglicized with but

little change of form, such as *embassage*, *recheat*, *baldrich*, *poniard*, *guerdon*, *blazon*, *enfranchise*, *empoison*, etc. Fashion itself is French.

The prosaic or practical or even the jocular reader might ask, why does not Hero or her friends prove an *alibi*? for Borachio himself says, "I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent." But such a measure on her part or on that of her friends, or any hesitation on the part of Leonato in accepting as true the grossly improbable story of the Prince and Claudio, would not only have marred the plot, but would have broken the uniform fashion that prevails among the characters of yielding a ready credence to whatever rumor or *on-dit* they hear without putting it to the slightest test or examination. They all alike are equally hasty at jumping to conclusions, equally negligent in asking for proof, — to such an extent indeed as to have drawn down on the dramatist from some quarters great ridicule for the improbability of the fable; and it is therefore fair to suppose that the play-writer, whose art never failed him, had a purpose in thus uniformly producing this effect. But whatever his design, it has rendered the picture of life here presented a most apt and striking illustration of those hasty and premature conclusions which characterized the old philosophies and which Bacon invented his method to put an end to. The dramatist, moreover, seems to rely upon the same loose and careless way of thinking on the part of his readers, for the acceptance of the events of his play as true, as that which he depicts as customary among the characters of the piece. And indeed the proofs — of which the constant exhibition throughout the piece is in accordance also with the "*form*" or *idea* of a *discourse* — are of the flimsiest and most superficial character, mere appearance and hearsay; yet as they gain credence and support opinions, productive of most unhappy consequences, they cause the piece to offer an illustration of the following weighty aphorism of Bacon. "Vicious proofs are as the strongholds and defences of *idola* (false opinions); and those we have in logic do little else than make the world the bond-slave of human thought and human thought the bond-slave of words. *Proofs truly* are in effect *the philosophies themselves and the sciences*. For such as they are, well or ill established, such are the systems of philosophy and the contemplations which follow. Now in the whole of the process which leads from the sense and objects to axioms and conclusions, the demon-

strations which we use are deceptive and incompetent. . . . In the first place, the impressions of the sense itself are faulty; for the *sense both fails us and deceives us* [as in the case of the Prince and Claudio when witnessing the interview between Margaret and Borachio]. Secondly, notions are ill-drawn from the impressions of the senses, and are indefinite and confused, whereas they should be definite and distinctly bounded [which receives ample illustration in the many instances of ambiguity of words made conspicuous in the play]. . . . Lastly, that method of discovery and proof, according to which the most general principles are first established and then intermediate axioms are tried and proved by them, is the parent of error and the curse of all science," — which is tantamount to reasoning upon imperfect premises, a method habitual with the personages of this piece.

What Bacon asserts of philosophy and the sciences is true of all knowledge however common and familiar; it is valid or worthless according to the nature of the proofs it rests on. It is the fashion of the world to form opinions upon vague reports and delusive appearances; and although such opinions have no weight, yet the bulk of the so-called knowledge on which the world rests its beliefs is made up of such opinions; and this is the special aspect of the world depicted in *Much Ado about Nothing*.



## THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

THIS play is a jest throughout; the little of serious there is in it serving only as a background to relieve its comic elements. Of its merits as a dramatic work, Dr. Johnson thus speaks:—

“The conduct of this drama is deficient: the action begins and ends often before its conclusion, and the different parts might change places without inconvenience; but its general power, that power by which all works of genius shall, finally, be tried, is such that perhaps it never yet had reader or spectator, who did not think it too soon at an end.”

These observations are true; but it is equally true that these imputed faults and imperfections (which do not at all interfere with the effect of the piece) may result from the poet's method, the first rule of which (so far as his own drama is concerned) is that a tragedy or comedy must be the development of a “literary form,” or of that idea that underlies some distinct and special class of writings; and in this piece we find that the management of time and place is the same as that of a story, in which, on account of its amusing incidents, we overlook the want of a strict causal connection of events, nor ask for any explanation of the how or the why this or that incident came about, but accept it all as true and natural for the sake of the amusement it affords. The *Merry Wives* is a succession of scenes, some of which stand independent of the others, and refer to disconnected events (one scene being entirely isolated), yet all furnishing matter for laughter, and these, being somewhat loosely stitched together, form a series of jests, culminating at last in one that unites all the actions and the agents of the play in one great farcical result. This points to the “form,” which apparently is that of “a book of jests,” or say, a jest, which generally is defined as words without serious meaning, and having no reason nor cause in the truth of things, but intended only for laughter. Unreality and false pretense are characteristic of jests, particularly of practical ones, which are made up of tricks and deceptions that befool and make

laughing-stocks of their victims. They are, of necessity, in contrast with the sincere, the earnest, the important, in one word, the rational; and rely for their effects upon the perversion of language in some mode; either, as in purely verbal jests, by simply playing upon words, as in puns and other intentional misuse of speech; or by misconstructions that give rise to unexpected turns of words; or by feigning facts and telling downright lies in order to mislead or betray their butts into actions or situations that expose them to ridicule; wherefore, the "form" of a jest may be stated as the *misuse of speech*, or the use of words without serious meaning or ground in truth or reality, but designed only for exciting mirth or rendering some person or thing ridiculous.

In the same category with jests may be placed *blunders* and improprieties of speech and manners; these excite mirth and often irrepressible laughter, so strong is the instinct to laugh at whatever is out of place or disproportionate, or said or done without cause or reason. Ungrounded suspicions come under the same head; they are simply unreasonable, and lead to actions for which there is no cause, and therefore provoke derision; as Master Ford says of his own jealousy: "If I *suspect without cause*, why then make sport at me; *then let me be your jest*, I deserve it."

Of deceptions practiced in order to bring about some ridiculous end, examples abound in comic stories and "merry tales," which turn upon the stratagems of the characters to outwit one another; such, for instance, as the devices of youthful lovers to cheat and deceive morose and ill-natured guardians or old and jealous husbands, or other supposedly unreasonable people, who are always deemed superfluous and in the way; and without being over-nice in their morality, or strictly observant of probability, — in truth, often grossly and palpably violating it, — they are accepted as true enough representations of life for the sake of their humorous vein and laughable catastrophes. They were jests and so looked upon, — not to be taken seriously, but designed for sport. Of this class is Tarleton's "News out of Purgatory," containing the adventures of "The Two Lovers of Pisa," on which this comedy is partly founded.

A play evolved from the idea of a jest, or words without serious meaning, — as is the *Merry Wives*, etc., — will naturally present a side of life with superficial characters and unimportant details, such as may frequently be found among the well-to-do



people of a country town, whose aims of life seldom rise higher than the procurement of comfort and the pleasures of the sense, and in whose domestic and social intercourse manners are familiar, and practical jokes not uncommon. In this world of petty interests, however, there is the same regard for social standing as elsewhere, and the predominant sentiment — as if in mockery of greater ambitions — is a love of personal consequence or sense of importance; and the question most frequently to be decided is whether a man is of import or importance, or is he only one who is without serious meaning, making life a jest through trivial aims, ridiculous manners, and want of appreciation of the earnest side of human nature.

The scene is laid at Windsor, a town which has a royal castle and court end, of which, however, we see nothing, but such mention is from time to time made of it as has the effect of impressing us the more forcibly with the condition and manners of that society into which the action of the piece takes us. This is the class of substantial commoners, some of whom having amassed riches are able to live without labor, and so “by the usage of England are entitled to be called *masters*, and be taken for gentlemen.” These people, as represented in this play, have a tone of good-will and readiness to render neighborly offices, and though they live almost exclusively for the good things of this world, they cherish pride of character and value truth and honesty; their plane of morality, however, is neither very high nor very low, while their religious faith, which lies imbedded in their minds like a moral fossil, is of the most orthodox pattern, having for its main article a belief that hell with eternal penalties awaits in a world hereafter all slips and transgressions of theirs in this life.

To this class belong George Page and Frank Ford, who are “masters and gentlemen,” intelligent and kind-hearted, prominent in the circle in which they move, frank in manners, but without pretensions to high birth or elegant accomplishment. They are wealthy, are fond of sports and good cheer, keeping hawks and hounds, and exercising a liberal and hearty hospitality. They are of about the same calibre mentally, but morally Page is the higher character, as he has more essential dignity, and is free from extremes of opinion, while Ford is of a jealous temper, that distorts both his judgment and feelings.



Their wives are fit helpmates for such men, being hearty, buxom dames, of not much dignity nor refinement, in fact, somewhat coarse in the texture of their minds and speech, but witty, fond of a laugh, and, while honest in purpose, ready for a joke though it be pushed to the extreme limits of decorum. The epithet "*merry*," given them in the title of the play, in some measure marks their disposition. In a quatrain, which seems purposely introduced to give epigrammatically the moral of the piece, Mistress Page says : —

"We'll leave a proof by that which we will do,  
Wives may be *merry* and yet be *honest* too :  
We do not act that often jest and laugh :  
'T is old but true. 'Still swine eat all the draff.'"

It is not in a refined stratum of society that the rough jokes of which Falstaff is the victim could be perpetrated.

Into this circle is introduced Sir John Falstaff, a knight and courtier, distinguished alike for the obesity of his person and the exuberance of his wit, but gross and sensual in his appetites and low and profligate in his aims. He sojourns as a guest at the Garter Inn, with his followers Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol, a set of thieving, "coney-catching rascals," who pick pockets and filch whatever they can lay hands on. Having heard that Ford and Page are rich, and that their wives hold the purse-strings, Falstaff resolves to make love to the women in order to reach, by means of their favor, the pockets of the husbands. With this intent, — for which only the most egregious self-esteem could have induced him to hope for success, — he writes love-letters to both of the wives, and directs Nym and Pistol to carry them to their respective addresses; but these unmitigated rogues see fit on a sudden to affect dignity and self-respect, and refuse the base office as derogatory, forsooth, to their honor as wearers of swords; a point which Falstaff does not stop to discuss, but dispatches his page with the letters, and forthwith discharges his scrupulous followers. The wives receive the letters with surprise and scorn, to which they give vigorous expression, but, upon conferring together, they are greatly amused at finding that both letters are couched in identically the same language, the names only being changed, and their sense of humor is also keenly touched by the infinite conceit of one like Falstaff, well-nigh worn to pieces with age, taking upon himself the part of a young gallant; and they, therefore, resolve to hold out to him hopes in order to draw him

on and betray him into some situation that will cover him with ridicule; and, to this end, they send him word to visit Ford's house at a particular hour. In the mean time, the two discarded servants reveal to Page and Ford Falstaff's design. Page treats the story with contempt, but Ford, more jealous, thinks that perchance there may be some ground for suspicion, and resolves to watch the course of things; and in order that he may do so more effectually, he seeks, in the disguise of one "Master Brook," an interview with Falstaff, and, by gifts of money and a plausible reason assigned for his wishes, induces the knight to undertake the inexpressibly mean and ungentlemanly office of wooing Mistress Ford, and, after gaining her confidence, of betraying it to him, that he may use the knowledge to coerce her to listen to a pretended suit of his own. Falstaff acquaints "Master Brook" with the hour of appointment between himself and Mistress Ford, which enables the jealous husband to come in upon their interview; but the ingenuity of the two women (for Mistress Page acts throughout in concert with her friend) secures Falstaff's escape from Ford's wrath, though only by means that expose him to the most laughable and ludicrous indignities. This occurs again and again, Falstaff being completely outwitted, and held up finally to public contempt and laughter.

Other jests are practiced by the host of the Garter, which make laughing-stocks of Dr. Caius and Sir Hugh Evans by sending them each to a different part of the forest to meet the other in a duel; and the play concludes with the double trick attempted to be played upon each other by Page and his wife in the marriage of their daughter, the one planning to marry her to Slender and the other counter-plotting to bestow her upon Dr. Caius, and both being duped and made ridiculous by Mistress Ann's taking the matter into her own hands, and running away with her lover, Fenton.

A play founded on the *idea* of a jest must have for a background the proper use of speech and the true rule of manners, which two are in some respects identical.

For jests, particularly practical ones, make free with persons, and are always, to some extent, breaches of decorum; they, therefore, raise the question of good manners. The true rule of manners seems to be comprised in reverence for others and reverence for one's self, or, as Bacon puts it, "the rule of manners may be



summed up in an exact balancing of our own dignity with that of others." This rule, while enjoining a due maintenance of one's own rights, forbids any infraction of the rights of others in person, property, or feelings. It bounds our conduct by the limits of reason, or, in other words, it requires that our ends (Lat. *fines*) at which our actions aim should be defined and approved by a sound discretion. Rational ends are the proper limits of all action, and the test of rationality is simply the assignment of a valid cause for our conduct. This rule, which tests all folly and underlies the action of the piece, is repeatedly brought forward with comic effect, — as in the instance of the Welsh parson, who, when waiting in the forest to fight with swords with Dr. Caius, and having for that purpose taken off his gown, is accosted by Shallow and Page (who pretend to be ignorant of the circumstances) as follows: —

"*Shallow.* What! the sword and the word! Do you study them both, master parson?"

"*Page.* And youthful still, in your doublet and hose, this raw, rheumatic day?"

The parson replies, by way of justifying his indiscretion, —

"There's *reasons and causes* for it."

And Ford, in searching his house for Falstaff, is able to withstand the jeers and ridicule of his friends for "suspecting without cause" by a firm, and in fact well-supported conviction, that the discovery of the knight will show that he has cause for his conduct, and that his suspicions are entirely within the bounds of reason.

In awarding respect to others we must be governed by knowledge of their worth; and in this point the judgment is apt to err, and often with unpleasant effects, for of all the minor wrongs and rubs of life there are but few which excite more bitter resentment than the slight which men put upon one another, either through the assumption of too much importance in themselves or the disdain they show for the importance of others. For such offenses there is no redress except of a personal nature, or some retaliation or revenge in kind. Hence the danger of jesting, for jests necessarily invade self-consequence, and are intrusions, to say the least, upon personal dignity; and on this account there is special need of *discretion* or that nice *discernment* that deter-



mines the exact bounds where mirth and good breeding end and offense begins. Still tricks and deceptions are held to be legitimate when directed against inordinate vanity, self-importance, hypocrisy, and similar vices, and particularly when used to foil knavery and fraud.

"Hang him," exclaims Mistress Page, in allusion to the tricks which she and Mistress Ford play upon Falstaff in revenge for his insulting proposals; "hang him, dishonest varlet! we *cannot misuse him enough!*"

Even in these cases there is a just period to be observed; on the other hand, there are subjects and persons of that worth that no attempt to ridicule them will for a moment be tolerated; consequently the limit to which a jest may be carried — and the same holds good of all behavior towards others — must be determined by the intrinsic worth and importance of the person affected.

And this importance, in turn, must be measured by the ends a person pursues, for ends being the objects of desire and the causes of action reveal the true import or importance of a man; if his ends be connected with great issues and affect many persons and interests, his import or importance is equally great; if, however, his ends are trivial and insignificant, he is rated accordingly.

But to bound or limit a thing is to *define* it or make a *definition*, which, verbally, is a statement of *what a thing is*. But this is the upshot of all philosophy, for, in Baconian language, it is to define "the true difference" or "form" of a thing; and this, when applied to man and his various attributes, determines his worth and importance, or the want of them, and fixes the measure of respect due to him.

We testify our respect to others by our mode of addressing them, and by the names and titles we bestow upon them. Terms of praise or abuse, and, indeed, all epithets drawn from the moral vocabulary of the language, are, like other descriptive names, liable, of course, to misapplication; and as in manners there must be fitness between a man and his actions, and in speech between the word and the thought, so especially should there be fitness between the title or epithet and the character it is applied to; therefore in bestowing titles and appellations, or in awarding respect and consideration to those who bear them, the judgment must be guided by an accurate knowledge of the man, and this, as we have seen, lies in definition.

But to definition, the proper use of speech is indispensable, such use being to express precisely and truthfully the meanings of the mind ; and, on the other hand, the grossest abuse of speech is *deceit*, as in lying, prevarication, falsehoods ; in which class, also, must be placed (apart from any question of morality) jests or words without serious meaning or ground in truth and reality. A play, however, which takes "the form" of a jest for its constructive principle must convert the world into words, but in the drama the world is imaged by men and women, and men and women may be considered as words by reason of their names and titles, on which latter to a great degree their social consequence is founded ; on this account the persons of this dramatic world are intent on making a definition of names and discovering what meaning or importance they carry ; to what extent are they significant or insignificant.

As names of *things*, words derive their meaning from the conceptions they stand for, and these conceptions should correspond with the real nature of the things ; but such accuracy is seldom practicable ; the same word will often stand for different conceptions in different minds, and be used with a different meaning.

In like manner proper names or the names of individuals should derive their meaning from the character, that is, the mind and disposition of those they stand for ; it is this which gives them their real significance and confers on the bearer his true import or importance, inasmuch as such import pertains to his essential nature, whereas those names of persons which derive their significance only from outward or accidental circumstances may be said to be without real importance or serious meaning, and are mere trifles, no better than jests.

This imperfection in the acceptance of words is a perpetual theme of complaint with Bacon, who, for this reason, discards the logic of the schools, which rests on the meaning of words, as the means of arriving at truth, and asserts that the only trustworthy proof in investigating nature lies in the evidence of the sense. Of the loose and ill-defined nature of words, he says : —

"There are Idols (false appearances) formed by the intercourse and association of men with each other, which I will call Idols of the Market-Place on account of the commerce and consort of men there. For it is by discourse that men associate, and *words are imposed according to the apprehension of the vulgar*. And the

*ill and unfit choice of words* wonderfully obstructs the understanding." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 43.

Idols of the Market-Place are the most troublesome of all; . . . now words being commonly *framed and applied according to the capacity of the vulgar follow those lines of division which are most obvious to the vulgar understanding.*" Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 59.

"Idols imposed by words on the understanding are of two kinds. They are either names of things which do not exist, or the names of things which exist, *but yet confused and ill-defined and hastily and irregularly derived from realities.*"

So also Bacon held that the distribution of things into *genera* and *species*, from which the *names of things are derived*, was merely for convenience' sake and taught us nothing of their real nature. He says, "the distribution of things into certain tribes, which are called categories and predicaments, are but cautions against the confusion of defective divisions." Adv. p. 275.

The only remedy for these imperfections of words is a true definition. But definitions are of different kinds, and, as this difference goes to the very meaning of the piece, it must be briefly stated.

Logicians divide definitions into *nominal* and *real*: nominal are those by which an unknown word is explained by one better known, as is done in dictionaries. With these the play has not much to do, yet does not wholly overlook them; as, for instance, a burlesque imitation of a nominal definition is given in the joke by which the host of the Garter, taking advantage of the French doctor's ignorance of English, covertly laughs at him.

*Host.* A word, monsieur mock-water.

*Caius.* *Mock-vater! vat is dat?*

*Host.* *Mock-water*, in our English tongue, is *valour*, bully.

*Caius.* By gar, then, I have as much mock-vater as the Englishman.

*Host.* He will *clapper-claw* thee tightly, bully.

*Caius.* *Clapper-de-claw! vat is dat?*

*Host.* That is, he will *make thee amends*.

*Caius.* By gar, me do look, he shall clapper-de-claw me; for, by gar, me vill have it." Act II. Sc. 3.

Real definition unfolds the nature of a thing, and is either *essential* or *accidental*.

The essential defines a thing by its real nature, and to make



such a definition is, as Whately says, "the end of all our study;" it corresponds to what Bacon calls the discovery of the "form," which, however deeply hidden and difficult to discover in things, is given in man, as "the soul is the form;" wherefore an essential definition of a man may be made by enumerating the properties of his mind and disposition, or his mental and moral attributes. These, as they admit of various degrees of development, are, though common to all men, in no two in the same measure; yet, in the case of an individual, his character can be sufficiently unfolded to determine his import and the amount of consideration to which he is entitled. Ford instances this, when, flattering Falstaff, he defines him by his mental accomplishments, yet in a way that measures the consideration that is paid him.

"*Ford.* Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose : you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allowed for your many warlike, court-like, and learned preparations." Act II. Sc. 2.

On the other hand, accidental definition (which, as Whately says, is commonly called a *description*) enumerates the *accidents* that constitute individual peculiarities, such as personal appearance, gait, complexion, color of hair, and other like particulars, as in Simple's definition of Slender (it being premised that a definition in a play assumes more or less the form of a dialogue, and is couched in the characteristic language and style of the speakers).

"*Quickly.* Peter Simple, you say your name is ?

*Simp.* Ay, for fault of a better.

*Quick.* And master Slender's your master ?

*Simp.* Ay, forsooth.

*Quick.* Doth he not wear a great round beard, like a glover's paring-knife ?

*Simp.* No, forsooth ; he hath a little wee face, with a little yellow beard ; a Cain-coloured beturd.

*Quick.* A softly-sprighted man, is he not ?

*Simp.* Ay, forsooth ; but he is as tall a man of his hands as any is between this and his head ; he hath fought with a warrener.

*Quick.* How say you ? oh, I should remember him ; does he not hold up his head, as it were, and strut in his gait ?

*Simp.* Yes, indeed, does he." Act I. Sc. 4.

Or the definition may be drawn from condition in life, rank, estate, place of birth, possessions, and the like, as in the following definition of Shallow, who is complaining of the wrong done him by Falstaff :—

*Shal.* If he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse *Robert Shallow, Esquire.*

*Slen.* In the county of Gloucester, justice of peace and coram.

*Shal.* Ay, cousin Slender, and custalorum.

*Slen.* Ay, and ratolorum, too; and a gentleman born, master parson; who writes himself armigero; in any bill, warrant, quittance or obligation, armigero.

*Shal.* Ay, that I do; and have done any time these three hundred years," etc.

Act I. Sc. 1.

Accidental definition throws no light upon the real nature of the individual; but as men attribute importance to that which they most love and wish for, the accidental definition, drawn from properties of person and estate, will for many minds often give an individual an importance much greater than any essential definition, however favorable, could do. And in this respect of making a true definition it is that the comedy draws a line between the real and factitious.

These accidental definitions, in which, perhaps, no two minds will agree, render the import of a proper name (or of a person considered as a word) analogous with those imperfect meanings of words which, being "imposed by the mind and capacity of the vulgar," are "ill defined and hastily abstracted from realities," so that they signify different senses to different minds, and this very naturally accounts for the variety of opinions that are frequently found about the same person.

The prominent figure of the piece is Falstaff. There has been much conjecture whether the Falstaff of this comedy precedes or follows in time the fat knight of the same name, who fills so large a space in the two parts of *Henry IV.*; and there has also been much speculation as to the period of Falstaff's life at which the events of the comedy took place; is he, as here presented, the first conception of the character, which was afterwards expanded into one of the most famous creations in all comic literature, or is he that character in eclipse and partial obscuration? This is a question, however, which involves a comparison of two distinct plays, and can hardly be properly raised when the comedy is treated of as an independent work of dramatic art; in such case, the character must be taken as it stands in the piece, and under the relations there found; and it is obviously not permissible to go outside of the play for hints of its import; otherwise, its artistic finish and its special meaning, as well as the special meaning of the comedy itself, will be perverted.



The Sir John Falstaff of the *Merry Wives*, etc., is an exponent of the idea of the play; for though he bears a title of dignity and worship (*worth-ship*), it is a word without serious meaning; he is a knight without a single knightly quality. His rank and breeding give him a factitious social importance, but on grounds of character he is entitled to no respect whatever. At the very opening of the piece we hear of him as a trespasser and poacher, having broken open the lodge and killed the venison of Justice Shallow, — a wrong he greatly aggravates by the effrontery with which he meets Shallow's complaints. He answers Slender, also, in the same vein, saying, "Slender, I broke your head, what matter have you against me?" These incidents have no consequences nor bearing upon the action of the piece, and seem to be introduced only to lay open at the outset the lawless and discourteous behavior of Falstaff. Though he never lacks brightness of thought and expression, Falstaff's tone is low, and argues debasement of mind and manners; his followers are thieves, for whose honesty he vouches, even while sharing in the proceeds of their larcenies; in all respects, he is destitute of dignity and honor, and, as Hazlitt says of him, "he is a bare-faced knave."

Yet his exuberant wit, and unfailing perception of the humorous side of things, together with his genial nature and freedom from malice, render him, in spite of his vices and dishonesty, a most captivating companion, of whose society we never tire. He is irresistibly amusing, and puts every impropriety in so ludicrous a light that we are forced to laugh, and even to forgive — for we seldom judge harshly those who divert us.

Falstaff is well aware that his rank and familiarity with the Court will give him great consequence with the wives of plain citizens, like Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, but the attentions they show him and the natural curiosity with which they observe him as a stranger of some distinction are misconstrued by him into an admiration of his person. This conclusion, which has no support in the truth of things, — and that a man of his knowledge of the world should entertain it would be amazing, except for instances quite as gross that one may daily meet with, — leads him to form a plan of which he discourses with his rascally followers; for he has neither delicacy nor dignity that will prevent his confiding to these paltry knaves, as parties in interest, his intent of making love to the two women for the purpose of cozening them and their husbands out of their money.



The passage, it will be observed, is, in its mode of expression, in entire keeping with the idea that the world is one of words.

"*Falstaff*. Briefly I do mean to make love to Ford's wife ; I spy entertainment in her ; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation ; I can construe the action of her familiar style ; and the hardest voice of her behaviour, to be English'd rightly, is, 'I am Sir John Falstaff's.'"

*Pistol*. He hath study'd her will and translates her will out of honesty into English." Act. I. Sc. 3.

Falstaff through vanity jumps to the conclusion that he will have an easy victory over the two women and that his greater experience of the world will easily outwit their simplicity ; and as for any complaint their husbands can make, he can answer it "by staring such mechanical salt-butter rogues out of their wits."

But how ill he has defined in his own mind the real natures of those he esteems so lightly is apparent in their comments on his letter. Mistress Page says : —

"What a Herod of Jewry is this ? O wicked, wicked world ! one, that is well-nigh worn to pieces with age, to shew himself a youthful gallant ! What an unweighed behaviour has this Flemish drunkard pick'd (with the devil's name) out of my conversation, that he dares in this manner to assay me ? Why, he hath not been thrice in my company ! What should I say to him ? I was then frugal of my mirth — heaven forgive me . . . How shall *I be revenged* on him ? *for reveng'd I will be*, as sure as his guts are made of puddings."

Mistress Ford in her comments dwells on the want of fitness between Falstaff's words and thoughts.

"I shall think the worse of fat men, as long as I have an eye, to make difference of men's liking ! And yet he would not swear ; prais'd women's modesty ; and gave such orderly and well-behav'd reproof to all uncomeliness, that *I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words but they do no more adhere and keep place together* than the hundredth psalm to the tune of 'Green Sleeves.'"

Falstaff's sense of importance and superiority to the humble people about him lays him open to their sly flatteries ; he does not dream that they see through him or that they would presume to outwit or to make sport of him ; and thus he becomes the dupe of even humble Mistress Quickly, who, too ignorant not to stumble in her grammar, is yet fine enough and keen enough to administer doses of flattery to Sir John, which he swallows without the slightest suspicion that he is made ridiculous. She tells him that the good women, Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, who had been

utterly deaf to all the wooings of nobles and courtiers when the Court lay at Windsor, had succumbed at once to his superior charms. This honeyed poison she hides in the following flowers of speech.

“Marry, this is the short and the long of it ; you have brought her into such a canaries as ’t is wonderful. The best courtier of them all when the Court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there has been knights and lords and gentlemen with their coaches I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift : smelling so sweetly (all musk), and so rustling I warrant you, in silk and gold : and in such alligant terms ; and in such wine and sugar of the best, and the fairest, that would have won any woman’s heart ; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her . . . and I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all : and yet there has been earls, nay, which is more, pensioners : but I warrant you, all is one with her.

*Fal.* But what says she to me ? be brief, my good she-Mercury.

*Quickly.* Marry, she hath received your letter, for the which she thanks you a thousand times. . . . I have another messenger to your worship : Mistress Page has her hearty commendations to you too . . . and she hopes there will come a time. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man ; surely, I think you have charms, la : yes, in truth.

*Fal.* Not I, I assure thee ; setting the attraction of my good parts aside, I have no other charms,” etc.

This intoxicating draught causes Falstaff to lose his head entirely, and he exclaims :—

“Ah ! ha ! Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, have I encompassed you ? go to, via !”

“Say’st thou so, old Jack, go thy ways : I’ll make more of thy old body than I have done,” etc.

To use his own words, when he afterwards comes to his senses, —

“To see now how wit may be made a jack-a-lent, when ’t is upon ill employment !”

Falstaff’s intrigues give the main movement to the piece. His counterfeit love is, of course, without the slightest support in truth, as, on the other hand, the pretended favor with which it is received by the wives is equally empty of all reality ; and so to the end of the joke ; the whole action of the piece is carried forward by false pretenses, thus making the play the development of “the form” of a jest, or that which has no ground in truth or fact.

When at the conclusion Falstaff is exposed, the jeers of the characters constitute a definition of him.

“*Mrs. Page.* Why, Sir John, do you think, though we would have thrust

virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders and have given ourselves without scruple to hell, that ever the devil could have made you our delight ?

*Ford.* What, a hodge-pudding, a bag of flax ?

*Mrs. Page.* A puff'd man ?

*Page.* Old, cold, wither'd, and of intolerable entrails ?

*Ford.* And one that is as slanderous as Satan ?

*Page.* And poor as Job ?

*Ford.* And as wicked as his wife ?

*Evans.* And given to . . . taverns and sacks and wines and metheglins, and to drinkings and swearings and starings, pribbles and prabbles ? ”

It is characteristic of Falstaff that upon discovering the tricks that have been played upon him he frankly owns that “he does perceive that he has been made an ass,” but it is equally in character with his “admirable dexterity of wit” that he gives an humorous turn to the affair, and breaks the force of the ridicule that is poured out against him by pretending that the greatest humiliation he suffers is in being obliged “to stand at the taunt” of the Welsh parson and endure his gibes in broken English.

“*Fal.* Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent such gross o'erreaching as this ? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too ? Shall I have a coxcomb of frize ? 'Tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.

*Evans.* Seese is not good to give putter ; your pelly is all putter.

*Fal.* Seese and putter ! have I liv'd to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English ? this is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realm.”

All Falstaff's words and actions are false and empty, his aims low and frivolous, his life without serious meaning, yet throughout he is provocative of mirth ; and he is, therefore, an embodiment of the “form” of a jest, and was created to be the source of perpetual laughter.

Empty self-consequence has a special representative in Justice Shallow. His dignity is grievously wounded by Falstaff's refusing redress for breaking into his lodge and beating his men ; but his complaint becomes a jest through the clamor he raises about it as a “riot” and “a Star-chamber matter.” Even when Page tells him that Falstaff had “in some sort confessed” the wrong, he is not appeased, but says : —

“If it be confessed, it is not redressed ; is not that so, Master Page ? He hath wronged me ; — indeed he hath ; at a word, he hath ; — believe me, *Robert Shallow, Esquire, saith, he is wrong'd.*”



Self-importance, however, never reached a more attenuated form than in Abraham Slender. His manners are ridiculous and his speech inane. His characteristic is ineptitude and his words and actions are invariably unfitted to time, place, and occasion. He tells us, however, that he is "a poor gentleman born," and that he "keeps three men and a boy till his mother be dead," but that which uplifts him most in his own estimation is his kinship with the great Justice Shallow, in whose reflected light he shines. He possesses also a small landed estate, which gives him consideration, not only in his own eyes but also in those of prudent fathers with marriageable daughters; and in his house there is "a great chamber," to enter which is the limit of his pride and his joy. "I would I might never come into my great chamber again," he says, by way of emphasizing his statement that Pistol had picked his pocket. So, too, his gloves and his hat are of that importance that he swears by them. "By this hat, then, he in the red face had it," he says of Bardolph's stealing his "mill-sipences" and "Edward shovel-boards."

Slender's words are without serious import or import of any kind, at least any that is appropriate to the occasion, — with one exception, and that a very important one. It is his answer to Shallow and Evans' inquiries whether he will marry Ann Page. The answer he makes is directly in accordance with the rule of propriety; in fact it is the rule of propriety itself, or the limit of conduct assigned by reason; yet Evans and Shallow get out of all patience with him for not answering, as they suppose, to the point, until Slender declares his willingness to marry, in terms that are utterly absurd and contradictory, and these the two wise-aces accept as perfectly satisfactory.

"*Shallow.* Come, coz; come, coz; . . . there is, as 't were, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off by Sir Hugh here. Do you understand me?"

"*Slen.* Ay, sir, you shall *find me reasonable*; if it be so, I *shall do that that is reason*."

Evans. The question is concerning your marriage.

Shal. Ay, there 's the point, sir.

Evans. Marry, is it; the very point of it; to Mistress Ann Page.

Slen. Why, if it be so, I will marry *her upon any reasonable demands*.

Evans. But can you affection the 'oman? Let us command to know that of your mouth or of your lips; for divers philosophers hold that the lips is parcel of the mouth. Therefore, *precisely*, can you carry your good-will to the maid?

*Shal.* Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her ?

*Slen.* I hope, sir — I will do as *it shall become one that would do reason.*

*Evans.* Nay, Got's lords and his ladies, you must speak possitable, if you can carry her your desires towards her.

*Shal.* That you must. Will you, upon good dowry, marry her ?

*Slen.* I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

*Shal.* Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz : what I do is to pleasure you, coz ; can you love the maid ?

*Slen.* I will marry her, sir, at your request ; but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are marry'd and have more occasion to know one another : I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt ; but if you say, *marry her*, I will marry her ; that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

*Evans.* It is a fery discretion answer ; save the faul' is in the 'ort *disso-lutely* : the 'ort is, according to our meaning, *resolutely* : his meaning is good.

*Shal.* Ay, I think my cousin meant well." Act I. Sc. 1.

Though humble in station, Mistress Quickly is not an unimportant personage. She is Dr. Caius's servant, and of her, in this capacity, Sir Hugh contrives the following definition : —

*Evans.* Ask of Dr. Caius' house which is the way ; and there dwells one Mistress Quickly, *which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry-nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer and his wringer.*"

She herself does better than this : speaking of Dr. Caius as her master, she says : " I may call him my master, look you, *for I keep his house and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds, and do all myself.*"

Mistress Quickly represents a common phase of self-consequence ; she boasts of favor and influence in quarters where favor and influence are desirable to have. Mistress Ann Page is the cynosure of neighboring eyes in Windsor, and it is with her that Mistress Quickly claims to have a voice potential. " She knows Ann's mind ; never a woman in Windsor," she says, " knows more of Ann's mind than I do, nor can do with her more than I can, thank Heaven." Shrewd, though frivolous, she pretends zeal for her master, Dr. Caius, whom she cajoles with stories of Ann's love for him ; yet is unscrupulously profuse of promises of success to all of Ann's suitors alike, and professes regret — no doubt sincerely — that she cannot bring about Ann's marriage with all of them. She would, if possible, please everybody : having no principle she is carried by the last impression.

She says of Fenton : —

"A woman would run through fire and water for such a kind heart. But yet I would my master had Mistress Ann; or I would Master Slender had her; or in sooth, I would Master Fenton had her; I will do what I can for all three! for so I have promised, and I'll be as good as my word; but speciously for Master Fenton," etc.

Her special merits shine forth in her services to the "merry wives." They know her capabilities; and casting about for a messenger to Falstaff, they select "that foolish carrion" Mistress Quickly (as Mistress Ford calls her), both agreeing that she will "fit it." In this business she is in her element. Her mixture of cunning and simplicity befools "the old fat fellow;" and she even goes so far as to instruct him in keeping up appearances for morality's sake. The page is spoken of as a go-between; and Mistress Quickly admonishes Sir John

"In any case to have a nay-word, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand anything, for *'t is not good that children should know any wickedness*: old folks, you know, *have discretion*, as they say, and know the world." Act II. Sc. 2.

Mistress Quickly's morality is purely verbal; it is a mere trick of speech and habit of invoking blessings, and ejaculating pious wishes that are so absurdly inappropriate to time and person that they evidently represent nothing in her mind, and are words only.

Sir Hugh Evans the Welsh schoolmaster, and Dr. Caius the French doctor, have humors and eccentricities which make them jests in themselves, and the effect is greatly heightened by their broken English; they are standing examples of the misuse and misapplication of words. Dr. Caius feels great importance from his practice at Court, and his professional intimacy with lords and ladies, while Sir Hugh plumes himself upon his knowledge of English, and does not hesitate to correct the grammar of his companions in language that is ludicrously incorrect both in idiom and pronunciation.

Falstaff's followers, Nym, Pistol, and Bardolph, are farce characters; they are all rogues alike, and are varied, not so much by cast of character as by modes of speech. Nym may be known by his use of the word "humour," which he presses into service on all occasions; as Page says of him, "He frights humour out of its wits."



In Nym's mouth, "humour" is a word so ill-defined that it means anything and everything alike.

Pistol's bombast — behind which there is nothing — runs into verse and rhyme so naturally and constantly that when, by chance, he drops into prose it seems to be out of character ; while Bardolph, who is less affected and more sensible than the other two, occasionally indulges in slang so unintelligible that Slender mistakes it for Latin.

With these characters thus marked by their speech rather than their sentiments, may be placed the Host of the Garter, who has no other name than his title, which in itself is a definition. He bubbles over with humor and vivacity, is a great wag and practical joker, and frequently challenges our admiration of his depth and reach by inquiries, "Said I well?" "Did I well?" "Am I subtle? am I politic? am I a Machiavel?" He affects to speak "scholarly and wisely," but like Sir Hugh is exceedingly tautological ; and, like Nym and Pistol, is an impersonation of a style ; he is painted by his use or misuse of words rather than by their inward meaning.

As this comedy exhibits a world of words, great stress is laid upon the giving of names, especially those carrying a moral import and affecting reputation. It has been observed that the piece furnishes a conspicuous instance of the misuse of a word in Sir John Falstaff, whose title of "knight," which connotes valor, courtesy, honor, and love, is ludicrously misapplied to so gross an embodiment of sensuality and selfishness as he is. So wide a difference between the name and the thing suggests the carelessness in the application of names and titles, and indeed the misuse of words generally, as *wise, foolish, honest, vile, gentleman, knave*, and other descriptive epithets, each one of which is *pro tanto* a definition. On this subject, Master Ford, after having in his disguise as Master Brook listened to Falstaff's abuse of him, culminating with "Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style ; thou, Master Brook, shalt know him for a knave and cuckold," thus comments : —

"What a damn'd Epicurean rascal is this ! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. . . . See the hell of having a false woman ! my bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at ; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me the wrong. *Terms ! names ! Amaimon sounds well ;*

*Lucifer, well ; Barbason, well ; yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends : but cuckold ! wittol ! cuckold ! the devil himself hath not such a name !*"

Act II. Sc. 2.

When Slender accuses Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol of picking his pocket, they make their defense by calling names.

*Slender.* Marry, I have matter in my head against you and your coney-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol.

*Bar.* You Banbury cheese.

*Slen.* Ay, it's no matter.

*Pist.* How now, *Mephistophilus*.

*Slen.* Ay, it's no matter," etc. Act I. Sc. 1.

The dialogue is couched in the familiar diction we hear in every day's talk ; and abounds in those inelegant, yet expressive vulgarisms, that are in current use among the common people, and are the vernacular of the language, such as "I'll never put my finger in the fire for it," "If I did n't think it had been Ann Page, I hope I may never stir," "That's meat and drink to me now," "My finger itches to make one," and many others.

Definition or limitation is a fundamental conception of the piece ; on its moral side, it is the rule of manners, or the limitation of the conduct by the reason, that is, by the knowledge of the true natures of men ; and on the philosophic side, it is the rule of language, or the limitation of the meanings of words by the reason or the knowledge of the true qualities of the things the words stand for.

According to Richardson, "to define (*Lat. definire, quasi finem dare*) is to set a bound or limit, to describe the bounds or limits, the end, the termination, and thus consequentially, to conclude, to determine, the ends ; *precisely to express, fully to describe, exactly to declare.*"

With the *definite*, then, will go the *limited, bounded, ended*, the *precise*, exact, and the like, of which the opposites are the *ill-defined*, the *vague, general*, etc., and these conceptions, which mutually balance and relieve each other and unite in one impression, will be found continually recurring in the diction and phraseology, yet without attracting particular attention, while by constantly striking the same note they fill the mind with a sense of one predominant tone pervading the piece.

A few examples of each will be given.

Indefinites are expressed : —

1. By phrases, vague, general, and indefinite in themselves; as, "It's *neither here nor there*;" "It's *all one*;" "He hath a *legion of angels*."

"He woos both *high and low*, both *rich and poor*,  
Both *young and old*, one with another, Ford."

2. By numbers taken indefinitely; as, "I warrant he hath a *thousand* of these letters;" "If he were *twenty* Sir John Falstaffs;" "As I will desires among *five thousand* and *five hundred* too."

In the next there is a definite phrase followed by an indefinite of this class:—

"None but he shall have her  
Though *twenty thousand* worthier come to crave her."

The following, also, combines the two:—

"Why, *thou unconfinable* baseness, it is as much as I can do, to keep the terms of my honour precise."

3. By tautology, which defeats precision by using more words than are needed.

Of this fault, Sir Hugh and the host habitually furnish examples.

Falstaff, who seldom wastes his words, yet in the dismissal of Nym and Pistol falls into tautology:—

"Rogues, hence, *avaunt*! *vanish like hail-stones*, go!  
*Trudge, plod, away, o' the hoof*; seek shelter, pack."

Here ten different commands are given for the execution of one purpose.

Many examples will be found of the indefinite and unprecise, under each of these three heads. The broken English of Sir Hugh and Dr. Caius is specially prolific of blunders.

Of phrases that express the *definite*, the *limited*, the *ended*, the following are some:—

"Hear and *end* it," "the sword should *end* it," "*period* of my ambition," "*period* of the jest," "and the *very instant of meeting*," "the *very same*, the *very hand*, the *very words*," "I love thee, and none but thee."

In the following phrases, a limit is assigned to the subject spoken of:—

"I shall as soon quarrel at it as any man in England."

"As honest as ever servant shall come in house withal."



"Never a woman in Windsor knows more of Ann's mind than I do."

"An honest woman as ever broke bread."

"One that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer as any is in Windsor, whoe'er be the other."

"Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does."

"If there be an honest woman, . . . she is one."

"If any man may, you may, as soon as any."

"I love you as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire."

"As foolish Christian creatures as I would desire."

In the next there is a limit placed to the desires, —

"I had rather than forty shillings, I had my book of songs."

"I had rather than a thousand pounds he were out of the house ;" —

or the reverse, or limit to unwillingness, —

"I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, . . . than my wife with herself."

Observe also the short definitions that are frequently introduced, as Slender's of Ann Page, —

"She has brown hair and *speaks small like a woman*," —

in which Slender assigns to Ann as a peculiarity that which is common to the whole sex ; or Shallow's definition of Page's dog, —

"Sir, he's a good dog and a fair dog : *Can there more be said ?* he is *good and fair*."

The criticisms that Ford's companions make upon his jealousy are notable instances of judgments passed upon conduct according to the rule or limit of reason.

"Ford. Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, have you then any way to unfool me again? Set down the basket, villain : Somebody call my wife ; Youth in a basket. Oh, you panderly rascals ! there's a *knot*, a *gang*, a *pack*, a *conspiracy*, against me. . . .

Page. Why, *this passes* [the due limit] ! Master Ford, you are not *to go loose any longer ; you must be pinioned*.

Evans. Why, *this is lunatics ! this is mad as a mad dog*."

The serious and rational view of things which gives relief to the jocularity and immorality that pervade the play is impersonated by Fenton and Ann Page.

Of Fenton, the host gives this definition : —

*“Host. What say you to young Mr. Fenton ? he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holy-day, he smells April and May : he will carry ’t, he will carry ’t.”*

Of these qualities, however, we see little or nothing in Fenton. Both he and Ann Page have depth of import ; they are sincere and earnest, and discern clearly what is of real importance to their happiness. The following short dialogue displays their natures and contrasts their aims and sentiments with the worldly and frivolous views of life of those around them : —

*Fen. I see I cannot get thy father’s love ;  
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.*

*Ann. Alas ! how then ?*

*Fen. Why, thou must be thyself.*

*He doth object, I am too great of birth ;  
And that, my state being gall’d with my expense,  
I seek to heal it only by his wealth.*

*Besides these, other bars he lays before me —*

*My riots past, my wild societies ;  
And tells me ’t is a thing impossible*

*I should love thee, but as a property.*

*Ann. May be, he tells you true.*

*Fen. No, heaven so speed me in my time to come.*

*Albeit I will confess thy father’s wealth*

*Was the first motive that I woo’d thee, Ann :*

*Yet wooing thee, I found thee of more value  
Than stamps in gold or sums in sealed bags ;*

*And ’t is the very riches of thyself*

*That now I aim at.*

*Ann. Gentle Mr. Fenton,*

*Yet seek my father’s love ; still seek it, sir ;*

*If opportunity and humblest suit*

*Cannot attain it, why then ” —*

Master Page would fain marry his daughter to Slender, simply because he has a landed estate, while his wife schemes to marry her to Dr. Caius, because he has money and a Court acquaintance ; neither gives any heed to the remonstrances of the young girl herself, who, though dutiful and extremely engaging in the quiet propriety of her demeanor and the mingled humor and good sense of her remarks, has her own opinions and her own will, if need be, to follow them. And here comes in the morality of the play, which, when compulsion is used to enforce demands beyond the

limits of reason, declares that the offense is "holy" that resists them.

"*Fen.* The *offence is holy* that she hath committed.  
Since therein she doth *evitate and shun*  
*A thousand irreligious cursed hours*  
*Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.*"

The imperfect connection between the scenes of the piece has been alluded to, but one scene (Act III. Sc. 1) has no connection with the action whatever; nevertheless it is easy to perceive how its place in a play which is evolved from the "form" of a jest may be accounted for. In the first place, it deals especially with words and the mistakes of speech, being the examination by the Welsh parson of a pupil in his Latin accidence; and next, the mispronunciation by Sir Hugh of the Latin together with the comments of Mistress Quickly, who takes them for English words, gives rise to a coarse and not very witty series of jokes, which, however, chime in with the prevailing tone of the piece. It may be observed that Sir Hugh's Welsh pronunciation of the Latin *hanc, hoc*, as *hang-hog*, and Mistress Quickly's remark that "she'll warrant that that is good Latin for *bacon*," is the same jest that Bacon records of his father, Sir Nicholas, who, having tried and condemned to death a criminal named Hog, who appealed for mercy on the ground of relationship, Hog being akin to Bacon, replied that "Hog was not Bacon until it was well hanged."

As a jest is in its essence a breach of manners and an abuse of speech, the play is filled with solecisms of manners and language, and seems to have been written to render words themselves a laughing-stock; and the world here represented as made up of names may be taken as a *jeu d'esprit* or burlesque illustration of those worlds created by the old philosophies, and so vigorously denounced by Bacon as being composed of definitions, that is, of *genera* and *species*, which are the mere names of things, of which the real natures are utterly unknown; and therefore worlds of words without meaning and no better than jests.



## ROMEO AND JULIET.

“THE nature of man coveteth divination,” and out of attempts to satisfy this desire have arisen many occult sciences, among which, no doubt, the one most popular and captivating to the imagination is astrology. This science assumes to read in the stars the lives and fortunes of men. Observations of the heavens were made at some particular hour, when, as the planets chanced to be posited in friendly or in hostile “houses,” or as their aspects were benign or malevolent, they were supposed to portend consequences good or evil. The temperaments of men, also, — both of mind and body, — were thought to be infused with certain qualities and their dispositions determined by the planet predominant at the hour of birth; while still another purpose of consulting the stars, and one, perhaps, the most important and practical of all, was the answering of “horary” questions, that is, “the election” or choice of hours most fit and auspicious for enterprises comprising pretty much all the transactions of public and private life. The observations thus made were collected and stated in a writing called “a horoscope,” by means of which an adept in astrology could read the future fortunes, good or bad, of its subject, and point to the hours which would be auspicious and so to be used, or unfortunate and so to be avoided. Such an interpretation of the heavens was called “a judgment,” and the science on this account was styled “*judicial astrology*.”

The term “horoscope” literally signifies “an observation of the hour or season;” the writings so named were rather scientific than literary, yet they constituted a very celebrated class of productions, and although they were “cast” for a great variety of purposes, they all rest on one underlying idea or “form,” namely, that the stars, as their aspects are of love or of hate, are causes from observation of which a *judgment* can be made of the effects, good or evil, that will befall men, or the particular hours and seasons determined which possess a fitness or unfitness for certain lines of action; and inasmuch as men consult the stars for pre-

cisely the same reason that they take counsel of the wise and experienced with respect to their conduct at any time, the simplest statement of "the form" of a horoscope seems to be that, like a counsel, it is a prediction from a knowledge of causes of the consequences that will follow upon a certain condition of things or certain events or actions.

The two prominent figures of the play are a pair of young lovers, who are under the influence of a powerful passion, which is intent only on its own gratification, and utterly regardless of consequences; and this picture is brought into high relief by the poet's taking the "form" of a horoscope as his structural principle, and making "the observation of the hour" and a forecast of consequences the law of his piece.

A horoscope has a parallel in mundane affairs in the exercise of a wise foresight with which the prudent man scans the aspects of men and the times in order to forecast their effects and to select the most favorable season for his own designs; and, indeed, the predictions of experience, which by its knowledge of causes possesses "something of prophetic strain," are analogous to "the form," or, rather, are "the form" of a horoscope; for the most familiar examples of such predictions are the counsels and warnings of the wise with respect to the consequences of this or that line of conduct.

In the world, therefore, depicted in this highly poetical play, every man before he acts casts, or should cast, his horoscope by observing the influence of the time and the aspects of things, from which, as they indicate favor or disfavor, he calculates the consequences of his own and others' conduct. Hope and fear attend on every action of which the issue is uncertain, and men expect good or forebode evil according as they see or feel or fancy that events must, in the natural order of things, have favorable or unfavorable issues. As among the heavenly bodies, some look with a benign and some with a malignant aspect, some are situated in friendly and others in hostile "houses," so in this lower sphere the aspects of the greatest influence are those of men and women (the latter being called in the play "earth-treading stars") whose loves or hates augur good or evil, of which, again, the effects are greatly increased by the friendly or hostile "houses;" in other words, the relations and connections to which they belong and of which they form part.

But to enlarge the scope of his piece, and obtain a direct parallel between the influence of the stars and that of the sights and sounds of this terrestrial world, the poet introduces into the play certain doctrines of Bacon with respect to what he terms "*magnetic*" or "*immaterial virtues*," which are analogous in their operation upon the minds of men to the irradiations of the stars upon their tempers; and, indeed, the irradiations of the stars are themselves mentioned as one class of such "*immaterial virtues*." These doctrines are laid down in *The Natural History* and partly in *The Advancement*, though it must be confessed that these books had not seen the light when this play was produced.

After speaking of those who "held that if the spirit of man do give a fit touch to the spirit of the world by strong imaginations and beliefs, it might command Nature, for Paracelsus and some darksome authors of magic do ascribe to imagination exalted the power of miracle-working faith," Bacon adds, "With these vast and bottomless follies men have been (in part) entertained;" and then goes on:—

"But we that hold firm to the works of God and to the sense, which is God's lamp, will enquire with all sobriety and severity, whether there be to be found in the footsteps of Nature any such *transmission and influx of immaterial virtues*, and *what the force of imagination is, either upon the body or upon another body*. . . .

"We will divide the several kinds of the operation by transmission of spirits and imagination, which will give no small light to the experiments that follow. All operations by transmission of spirits and imagination have this, that they work at distance and not at touch; and they are these being distinguished.

"The first is the transmission or emission of the thinner and more airy parts of bodies, as in odours and infections, and this is of all the rest the most corporeal.

"The second is the transmission or emission of those things *that we call spiritual species*, as *visibles and sounds*, etc. . . .

"The fourth is the emission of spirits and immaterial powers and virtues, in those things which work by the universal configuration and sympathy of the world . . . of this kind is the *motion of gravity*, etc.

"The fifth is the *emission of spirits*; namely, the *operation of the spirits of the mind of man upon other spirits*; and this is of



a double nature: *the operation of the affections if they be vehement; and the operation of the imagination, if it be strong.* But these two are so coupled as we shall handle them together; for when an *envious or amorous aspect doth infect the spirit of another*, there is *joined both affection and imagination.*

“The sixth is *the influence of the heavenly bodies, besides those two manifest ones of heat and light,*” etc. Nat. Hist. Cent. X. §§ 904–909.

“The affections (no doubt) do make the spirits more powerful and active, and especially *those affections which draw the spirits into the eyes; which are two, love and envy.* As for love, the Platonists (some of them) go so far as to hold that the spirit of the lover doth pass into the spirits of the person loved, which causeth the desire of return into the body whence it was emitted; whereupon followeth that appetite of contact and conjunction which is in lovers. . . . We see the *opinion of fascination is ancient of procuring love, and fascination is ever by the eye.*” Nat. Hist. Cent. X. § 944.

This same doctrine of “magnetic virtues” he introduces into his interpretation of the fable of Pan, viz. : —

“The body of Nature is elegantly represented as covered with hairs, in *allusion to the rays of things.* For rays are the hairs of Nature, nor is there anything *that is not more or less radiant.* This is seen most evidently in the *faculty of sight, and no less in all magnetic virtues*, having effects which take place at a distance. For whatever *produces an effect at a distance may be truly said to emit rays.*” De Aug. Book IV. ch. xiii.

The above-mentioned doctrine of Fascination is also introduced into the *De Augmentis*, where it is spoken of in connection with the *Art of Divination* in a passage that will be cited, as both subjects, particularly the latter, is largely illustrated in the piece.

“Fascination is the power and act of imagination intensive upon the body of another. . . . Others, looking with a clearer eye at the secret workings and impressions of things, the irradiations of the senses, the passage of contagion from body to body, the conveyance of magnetic virtues, have concluded that it is much more probable there should be impressions, conveyances, and communications from spirit to spirit (seeing that the spirit is above all other things both strenuous to act and soft and tender to be acted on), whence have arisen those conceits (now become

as it were popular) of the mastering spirit, of *men unlucky and ill-omened, of the glances of love, envy, and the like.*" De Aug. Book IV. ch. iii.

"The operation of the mind and its passions upon the body has also found a place in medicine. For there is no physician of any skill who does not attend to the accidents of the mind as a thing most material towards recoveries. But another question has been but sparingly enquired into, and no wise in proportion to its depth and worth, namely, how far the *very imagination of the mind* or a *thought strongly fixed and exalted into a kind of faith* is able to alter *the body of the imaginant*. For although it has a manifest power to hurt, yet it follows not it has the same power to help." De Aug. Book IV. ch. i.

With regard to Divination, he thus discourses : —

"Divination has been anciently and not unfitly divided into two parts, Artificial and Natural. Artificial makes *prediction by argument, concluding upon signs and tokens*; Natural forms a *presage from an inward presentiment of the mind* without the help of signs. Artificial is of two sorts; *one argues from causes*, the other only from experiments by a kind of blind authority. . . . Artificial divination of both kinds is dispersed among different knowledges. The astrologer has his predictions from the position of the stars. The physician likewise has his predictions of approaching death, of recovery, of coming symptoms of diseases, from the pulse, the look of the patient, and the like," etc. De Aug. Book IV. ch. iii.

This tragedy, then, which adopts the "form" of a horoscope as its organizing principle, substitutes for the irradiations of the stars the rays of things in this terrestrial world; that is, the sights and sounds which are constantly crowding on our attention, and of which some are extremely powerful over the feelings, being, in fact, often decisive of the fates of men. All sights and sounds, unless very familiar, excite in some degree love or hate, but this is especially the case with those aspects and influences of things which appeal directly to our sympathy or antipathy, as the human face and eye and speech, and generally the beauty of men and women: these feelings are liable to run into great and uncontrollable extremes, unless checked by consideration of the consequences of their indulgence; and in forecasting such consequences it is especially needful that it be done by the judgment reasoning



from cause to effect, and not by the imagination, which paints the future as the desires and passions would have it.

In this piece, therefore, the judgment is exercised with respect to sights and sounds, and the feelings they awaken, comprising the influences of beauty and the power of the eye and human aspect over the mind ; and also the power of sounds, particularly of words and names, together with the "transmission of immaterial virtues" and the occult power of "the imagination and spirit over the spirit of man," and, in short, all sights and sounds and rays of things that move the feelings and excite love or hatred in any degree. And as the astrologer forms "a judgment" with respect to the future from the good or evil aspects of the stars, so in this nether world, men must form a judgment on the sights and sounds that work upon their affections and portend happiness or misery to their futures.

In making these judgments, however, men are often fatally misled by their imaginations, which idealize the objects of their affections, enhancing the merit and veiling the defects of what they love, and denying any virtue and attributing all evil to what they hate ; in other words, they know but little or nothing of the real nature of what they judge ; they are governed by sights and sounds, without going beneath the surface to the deep and hidden truth of things.

It may be observed that it was precisely to correct these hasty and premature judgments or "anticipations" of the mind, more especially with reference to physical nature, though in reality applicable to all subjects alike, that Bacon invented his method of induction.

The most prominent instance in the piece of the influence of looks and aspects to move the mind is the mutual fascination which Romeo and Juliet exercise on one another ; and this is an illustration of that class (the "fifth" before mentioned) of "immaterial virtues," which Bacon puts down as "emission of spirits or the operation of the spirits of the mind of man upon the spirits, and this is of a double nature, the operation of the affections if they be vehement, and the operation of the imagination if it be strong. But these are," he says, "*coupled in an amorous glance, for when an amorous aspect doth infect the spirit of another there is joined both affection and imagination.*" Of this doctrine the sudden "bewitchment" at the first exchange of glances between Romeo and Juliet is clearly an instance.



The Italian sky and climate given to this play, the midday heat, the moonlight nights, the song of the nightingale from the pomegranate-tree, and other touches of local coloring, are pointed out by critics as instances of the harmony which is preserved in a Shakespearian play between external nature and the moral atmosphere of the piece; and this, no doubt, proceeds from the poet's own vivid conception of the world which he portrays, and heightens immensely the beauty of the work as a poetic creation; but there is another and subtler harmony, which proceeds from the poet's art, and which contributes perhaps not so much to the beauty as to the truth of the picture. It is the correspondence between the characters and their environment; between the action of the piece and that peculiar phase of the social world in which it takes place. This mutual adaptation results from the development of the "form," which, in this case, being that of a horoscope, causes the world here presented to be governed by "observation or election of the hour," that is, by appointed hours and fixed dates for special actions. Both State and Church are regulated by stated periods for affairs, — in the one by terms, sessions, holidays, and the like; in the other by festivals, fasts, and other ceremonial days, — of which dates some are mentioned in the piece; but *Romeo and Juliet* being a household tragedy it brings prominently forward the habits of domestic life, and these have their origin in the observation of the hour and the choice of times fittest for those uses that make up the domestic routine. Work, play, sleep, meals, devotions, and other familiar observances, as, for instance, Capulet's "old accusom'd feast," have each of them their appointed hours; and this "election" of hours having originally been made on account of their natural fitness for their purposes, they become, notwithstanding any slight variation of individual choice, prevalent throughout the community, and after long usage gain authority as manners and morals; just as in the State customs, by prescription, become laws that maintain the peace and order of society. To "keep good hours," *i. e.*, to conform one's conduct to that use for which the hour is deemed fittest and for which it is generally employed, is a sign of well-ordered life and indicates prudence and morality.

On the other hand, whatever happens out of the daily routine, whatever is untimely or out of order or of place, too early or too late, or in any way at variance with the usual sequence of events

in civil or domestic life, is imputed to misconduct, misfortune, or mistake, exciting alarm and inquiry, and, where injury is inflicted, entailing punishment. In such cases pardon or punishment is awarded according to the ability of the offender to excuse himself by showing that he made due "observation of the hour," or, in other words, that he acted with all due circumspection, but that unforeseen causes beyond the scope of human calculation had thwarted his plans and drawn on sinister consequences. Thus the Friar, when Juliet awakes in the tomb, excuses the tragical failure of his plan by saying, —

"A Greater Power than we can contradict  
Hath thwarted our intents."

And thus, too, when he is found at midnight in the cemetery with implements in his possession for breaking open tombs, and at the same time it is discovered that the sepulchre of the Capulets has actually been forced, and near by are lying the bodies of Juliet, Romeo, and Paris, newly slain, — a spectacle calculated to excite the greatest fear and amazement, — he exculpates himself by a statement of the strange and unknown causes of the occurrence. He says: —

"I am the greatest, able to do least,  
The most suspected (as the *time and place*  
*Doth make against me*) of this direful murder ;  
And here I stand both to *impeach and purge*  
*Myself condemned and myself excused*," —

and then gives a narrative of the hidden causes that have led up to the dire catastrophe.

Conduct, therefore, which is a breach of custom, and events that fall out contrary to usage, excite apprehension as to their causes and anxiety as to their results ; they awaken forebodings of misadventure that either has already happened or is about to happen. The cure for all misgivings of this kind lies in a knowledge of causes obtained by examining into all the relations of the circumstances with the main fact, thus constituting, as it were, a horoscope through which a presage can be made of the consequences that will follow and of the remedies to be applied.

This is illustrated in a breach of custom by Romeo, who, distracted with love of Rosaline, turns day into night and night into day, an irregularity that greatly excites the solicitude of his father, who thus describes him: —



“Many a morning hath he there been seen  
 With tears augmenting the fresh morning dew,  
 Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs ;  
 But all so soon as the all-cheering sun  
 Should in the furthest East begin to draw  
 The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,  
*Away from light steals home my heavy son,*  
*And private in his chamber pens himself,*  
*Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,*  
*And makes himself an artificial night.”*

And in ignorance of the causes of such conduct Montague adds this foreboding : —

“Black and portentous must this humour prove,  
 Unless good counsel may the cause remove.”

This proviso goes to the root of the matter : good counsel warns against the consequences of willful passion ; it is the unpalatable hellebore that is the best corrective of this species of insanity. But in this tragedy it is analogous with the “form” of a horoscope, which sets forth the causes that will draw on certain results.

In Romeo's case the cause is deeply hidden, and the necessity of discovering it in order to apply a remedy is thus stated : —

“Ben. My noble uncle, do you know the cause ?  
 Mon. I neither know it, nor can learn of him.  
 Ben. Have you importun'd him by any means ?  
 Mon. Both by myself and many other friends :  
 But he, his own affections' counsellor,  
 Is to himself — I will not say how true —  
 But to himself so secret and so close,  
 So far from sounding and discovery  
 As is the bud bit by the envious worm  
 Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,  
 Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.  
*Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,*  
*We would as willingly give cure as know.”*

Act I. Sc. 1.

But to gain a knowledge of the cause by examining into all the bearings and influences of the circumstances of an event, and then prejudge the consequences, is identical with that species of Divination which Bacon classifies as “Artificial Divination that makes prediction by argument from causes,” and this applied to practical life is prudence ; from which we can see with what ingenuity a parallel is found between one of the commonest rules



of conduct and a horoscope, which for poetic and artistic purposes is made the law of the piece, and how intimately this idea is wrought into its structure.

Another passage that animadvertes upon conduct which, being at variance with custom, is indicative of unsoundness or "distemperature" of mind, or of body, or of both, is the address of Friar Laurence to Romeo, who has visited his cell at an unwontedly early hour.

"Young son, it *argues a distemper'd head*  
 So soon to *bid good morrow to thy bed* :  
 Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,  
 And, where care lodgeth, sleep will never lie ;  
 But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain  
 Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign ;  
 Therefore *thy earliness* doth me assure  
 Thou art uprousd by *some distemperature* ;  
 Or, if not so, then here *I hit it right*,  
 Our Romeo *hath not been in bed to-night*," etc.

Act II. Sc. 3.

The fitness that is attributed to the hours from their favorable or unfavorable aspects for special actions is extended also to times more general ; for night, day, morning, evening, midnight, noon, even light, darkness, heat, cold, and other phases of external nature (all of which enter into Mundane or Atmospheric Astrology, and form part of what Bacon calls "Sane Astrology," and are matter for a horoscope), have such a special influence that makes them serviceable for some purposes rather than for others. The same is true, in some measure, of the days of the week, and the salutations of "good morrow" (morning) and "good den" (evening), which are so numerous in the play, are wishes that these times may be propitious.

This environment of manners and customs, and the impress it makes upon the minds of the persons of the piece, occasion the many familiar allusions which they let fall to dining, supping, bedtime, devotions, and the like customary incidents of daily life, both as regulative of actions, or, what is perhaps more frequent, as marking somewhat that is untimely, too early, too late, etc.

The mode in which the "form" shapes the action of the piece (and as the "form" in this play appertains to time, the time of the action is determined by it) is conspicuous in the fact that every scene or nearly every scene brings up the consideration of

the time or hour or period of life with reference to its fitness for some special use; as, to instance some of them, Lady Capulet and the Nurse (Act I. Sc. 3) discuss the seasonableness of Juliet's age for marriage.

"*La. Cap.* Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age.

*Nurse.* 'Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

*La. Cap.* She's not fourteen.

*Nurse.* I'll lay fourteen of my teeth

(And yet to my teen be it spoken I have but four),

She's not fourteen. How long is it now

To Lammas-tide?

*La. Cap.* Younger than you

Here in Verona, ladies of esteem

Are made already mothers: by my count

I was a mother much upon these years

That you are now a maid," etc.

The same topic is a subject of conversation between old Capulet and Paris (Act I. Sc. 2):—

"*Paris.* But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

*Cap.* But saying o'er what I have said before:

My child is yet a stranger to the world,

She hath not seen the *change of fourteen years*:

*Let two more summers wither in their pride,*

*Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride,"* etc.

A negative instance is that of old Capulet's reminding his cousin at the ball (Act I. Sc. 5) of the unfitness of their ages for masking and dancing:—

"*Cap.* Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet;

For you and I are *past our dancing days*:

*How long is 't now*, since last yourself and I

Were in a mask?

2 *Cap.* By'r lady, *thirty years*.

1 *Cap.* What, man! 't is not so much, 't is not so much:

'T is since the nuptial of Lucentio,

Come Pentecost as quickly as it will,

Some five-and-twenty years; and then we mask'd," etc.

Friar Laurence (Act II. Sc. 3) goes out before sunrise to gather herbs under the planetary hour. He says:—

"Now ere the sun advance his burning eye

The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,

I must up-fill this osier cage of ours

With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers," etc.

He also notes the aspect of the hour : —

“The *gray-ey'd morn smiles* on the *frowning night*,  
Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light,” etc.

Juliet (Act II. Sc. 5) calculates the time of return of the Nurse, whom she has sent to Romeo ; and comments also on the unfitness of the Nurse's time of life for acting as a love-messenger.

“The clock *struck nine*, when I did send the Nurse :  
In half an hour she promis'd to return.

Now is the sun upon the *highmost hill*  
Of *this day's journey* ; and from nine till twelve  
Is three long hours, — yet she is not come.  
Had she *affections* and *warm youthful blood*,  
She 'd be as *swift in motion as a ball*.  
But *old folks*, many feign as they were dead ;  
*Unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead*.”

In Act III. Sc. 1, heat is considered in its astrological phase as influencing the tempers of men. Benvolio begs Mercutio to retire from the street; as, —

“The day is hot, the Capulets are abroad,  
And, if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl :  
For now, *these hot days*, is the mad blood stirring,” etc.

This is a true augury, and is verified immediately afterwards. Mercutio banters Benvolio (a pattern of prudence) by attributing to him his own quarrelsome disposition, and predicts his own fate in these words : —

“Nay, an there were two such, we should have none shortly, for one would kill the other.”

This is followed by his combat with Tybalt, which he provokes, and in which he is killed.

Act III. Sc. 2 : Juliet's soliloquy and invocation to night to hasten her coming, as being the time fittest for the meeting of lovers.

Act III. Sc. 4 : Capulet and Paris fix on the properest day for the marriage of the latter to Juliet : —

“Wife, go you to-her ere you go to bed :  
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love ;  
And bid her, mark you me, on *Wednesday next*, —  
But soft, what day is this ?  
Paris. Monday, my lord.



*Cap.* Monday ! ha, ha ! Well, *Wednesday is too soon,  
O' Thursday let it be ; — o' Thursday, tell her,  
She shall be married to this noble earl,"* etc.

Act III. Sc. 5 : Romeo and Juliet contend whether it is the lark or the nightingale that sings, that is, whether it is night or morning, and a time fitter for Romeo to stay or go.

And so on throughout the scenes generally the time is specified in one mode or another. In Act IV. Sc. 4, it is done in this phraseology : —

*"Cap.* Come, stir, stir, stir ! The *second cock hath crow'd.  
The cur-few bell hath rung, 't is three o'clock,"* —

where it would appear that the poet presses the curfew into his service at a rather unusual hour for its ringing. It serves a double purpose, however, for it is an instance, also, of the influence of sound.

As the particular employment of the hours gives rise to customs, so the different periods of life, in its broader divisions, have certain fitnesses occasioning special customs in the uses of time, as youth is fit for love and pleasure, and age for gravity and wisdom ; and out of the mutual relations of these two periods there grow, by operation of natural law, suitable manners and morals, such as reverence of youth for age, and docility to its counsels, obedience of children to parents, and, on the other hand, kind and considerate guidance and instruction of youth by age, of which apt and seasonable conduct, insubordination on the one side and tyranny on the other are violations, from which it is not difficult to cast a horoscope with respect to them, for they are sure to bring consequences often of the most deplorable nature, — youth running wild and perishing through its own excesses, while the harsh exercise of authority by age is met by fraud and subterfuge, which, in most cases, draw after them the bitter penalties of sorrow and shame.

In the physical world an action has its consequences in a series of efficient causes, linked each to each, as is often exemplified by the action of billiard-balls, of which the first impels the second, the second the third, and so on.

But in the moral world the outward action, which physically may have no causal connection whatever with that which prompts it, is but the sign and show of the inward motive, and this, as it

is good or bad, has its consequences in the mode in which it affects others in their sentiments of approval or disapproval, their love or hate, their desire to reward or punish. These reactions are the working of that justice that preserves the equilibrium of the universe by causing every irregularity or disturbance to be corrected by its consequences. The perception of these reactions enables men to make a moral forecast, and calculate the effects of any meditated action.

As a proof of the extreme care with which this artist shapes the most unessential parts of his dialogue by "the form," may be noticed an instance of a consequence resulting from a physical cause, which the Nurse gives in a prediction to old Capulet, who, in his eagerness to speed the preparations for Juliet's wedding, purposes to sit up all night.

"Go, [she says,] you cot-quean, go.  
Get you to bed : faith, you 'll be sick tomorrow  
For this night's watching."

If an instance, however, of a more serious nature is needed (and the play is full of them), Romeo's last words, after he has drunk the poison, may be cited : —

"O true apothecary,  
*Thy drugs are quick.*"

Of consequences from moral causes, there may be taken, as an instance, the Friar's warning to Romeo, who, after his banishment, refuses to listen to any advice or take any consideration of the future.

"A pack of blessings lights upon thy back ;  
Happiness courts thee in her best array ;  
But, like a misbehav'd and sullen wench,  
Thou poutest at thy fortune and thy love :  
*Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.*"

So uniform is the connection of moral cause and effect that the horoscopes that are cast of causes in the moral world are sure of being verified by results, provided the observation of the aspects of things be accurately made, and the true causes of conduct discovered ; but in this lies the difficulty, for the aspects, that is, the sights and sounds of this world of eye and ear, and especially the looks, actions, and words of human beings, are to the last degree ambiguous as expressive of their real motives ; and before we can use them as causes to trace effects, it is indispensable that



we should ascertain their true natures. It is through the misconceptions, by the different characters of the causes of prominent actions and incidents that the misadventures and disasters that befall them occur; Tybalt mistakes Romeo's motives in being at the ball; Mercutio mistakes Romeo's feelings in declining the challenge of Tybalt; old Capulet utterly misconceives the cause of Juliet's tears; each of these is a fatal mistake that hurries the action of the play forward to its catastrophe.

But the investigation of natures and causes is the work of philosophy, — and these plays seem always to get round to that point, — and consequently the observation of the hour, or of the events of the hour, perfectly made, is the same in kind if not in degree with the investigations of the man of science. As an eminent philosopher has said, "It is evident that the ultimate object which the philosopher aims at in his researches is precisely the same with that which every man of plain understanding, however uneducated, has in view when he remarks the events which fall under his observation in order to obtain rules for the future regulation of his conduct."<sup>1</sup>

The "observation of the hour," then, is identical, as has been said, with Bacon's Artificial Divination that predicts from cause to effect; it is the work of reason free from all the idealizing influences of imagination and passion and deducing consequences from the study of phenomena; it is the fruit of full deliberation before action, and precludes that haste and precipitancy which arise from the predominance of some powerful desire over the will: it therefore argues a balance of mind and perfect temper which admit of no extremes, but in which all constituent qualities hold an exact mean, and leave an undisputed sway to the reason. All extremity and excess disturb the equilibrium of nature, without which there can be neither order nor peace, and the recoil and punishment are inevitable.

This doctrine prevails throughout the Shakespearian drama, and is very strongly presented in this piece. Even the human lawgiver cannot himself escape if he, perchance, hold not the scales justly. Mercy, that tolerates wrong, must itself share in the penalty. Thus Prince Escalus, who to justify his sentence of banishment on Romeo had said, —

"Mercy but murders, pardoning those who kill," —

<sup>1</sup> Stewart's *El. of Phil.* Part III. ch. iv. § 1.



afterwards when standing with Montague and Capulet before the dead bodies of their children, — the fearful outcome of their hate, — admits that his own leniency in dealing with their feuds had involved him, the representative of the law, in the punishment.

“ Where be these enemies ? Capulet ! Montague !

See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,

That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love !

And I, *for winking at your discords too,*

*Have lost a brace of kinsmen : — all are punish'd.*”

Act V. Sc. 3.

The man of perfect temper, in whose nature are mingled opposite qualities in such proportions as to prevent the undue predominance of any, is self-governed ; he knows the proper use of things and the consequences of excess and uses without abusing all his appetites, desires, affections, and faculties ; in other words, he is wise through a knowledge of causes, and is the ideal and standard of judgment with respect to the characters of this piece.

Self-restraint and docility of will, which always adorn the character that possesses them, are in this play termed “ grace,” which term in the Shakespearian usage has a wide significancy of moral beauty, as applied to character and manners. The doctrine of moderation and the proper use of things is set forth in the play in a didactic passage much more openly than is at all usual in the Shakespearian drama, for the doctrinal morality of these plays, like their philosophy and science, is almost always hidden behind the vividness of the life and action represented. In a soliloquy of Friar Laurence, a parallel is run between the properties of plants and men, which teaches that even virtue becomes vice unless so tempered as to be held in check from excess.

“ O, mickle is the powerful grace, that lies

In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities :

For nought so vile that on the earth doth live,

But to the earth some special good doth give ;

Nor aught so good, but, strain'd from that fair use,

Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse :

Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied ;

And vice sometimes 's by action dignified.

Within the infant rind of this small flower

Poison hath residence and med'cine power:

For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part ;

Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.

Two such opposed foes encamp them still

In man as well as herbs, — *grace and rude will* ;  
 And, where the worser is predominant,  
 Full soon the canker death eats up that plant."

Act II. Sc. 3.

There is no step in life requiring more careful consideration of the consequences than marriage. It is a step about which youth most needs counsel, and is least willing to take it. In Latin countries marriage is subject to a rigorous custom, which endows the parents with the right of managing the marriage of the children, and it is claimed for the custom that experience shows that it is wiser to rest the security of the future rather on settlements and jointures than on the affection of the married couple. On this account, marriage contracts in these countries are made by the parents and not by the young people, who are supposed to be ready to acquiesce in whatever arrangement their friends make for them. In such a matter it is plain that both parent and child have rights, and it is by no means always easy to draw an exact line between them. Due and fair consideration should be given to remonstrances on both sides. The best laid schemes of the parent are often marred by willfulness of children, while the tyranny of parents is met by deception and stratagem, often of the most desperate nature; and to this does the unseasonable violence of old Capulet drive his daughter Juliet.

Custom, originating in the observance of times and forming the morals and manners of Society, receives a representation in the social life of the Verona of this piece, a city where the lives of the citizens under the gentle sway of Prince Escalus have fallen into so tranquil a routine that even their weapons have become cankered with rust through long disuse. This fixity of custom is made the background of a picture filled with the sudden turns and violent vicissitudes of fortune. The habitual peace of the town is broken by a sudden outburst of the feuds of the Montagues and Capulets, which fills the streets with brawl and bloodshed, and make

"Verona's ancient citizens  
 Cast by their grave beseeching ornaments  
 To wield old partisans, in hands as old,  
 Canker'd with peace, to part their canker'd hate."

This infraction of the public peace calls out the Prince, who threatens death as a consequence to any who shall again offend.



The domestic peace, moreover, of both the hostile "houses" is jeopardized by a gross breach of custom on the part of Romeo and Juliet, the respective representatives of their families, by a clandestine marriage. They both rush forward to the gratification of their desires without attempting to place the slightest check upon the ardor of their passion. But the play-writer evidently intends that they shall carry our sympathies with them, while, yet, he makes no compromise with their errors; he consequently takes pains to provide for our condoning their utter disregard of consequences by depicting them under the influence of an irresistible passion, which binds them, as it were, by witchcraft, and which takes possession of them before they know or can know of any reason why it should not be indulged: when they discover that they are hereditary enemies, they are startled and alarmed as if they had fallen unawares into a great peril; they are conscious in their hearts that the hostile aspect of their houses sheds a baleful influence on their union, but when they learn this it is too late, and their love is inextricably intertwined with the fierce hates of their families, which, in connection with their immaturity and inexperience, thwart all their efforts to reach a happy issue; they are driven to desperation and die by their own hands.

The predominance of certain desires and humors in the temperament, which causes so great a variety of dispositions in the world, was attributed by astrology to the influence of the stars in the ascendant at the time of nativity, which infused a predominance of some particular quality in the child then born. This was a popular belief, and was alluded to by Bacon, who, treating of the natures of men, remarks:—

"In the traditions of astrology men's natures and dispositions are not unaptly distinguished according to the predominances of the planets; for some are naturally formed for contemplation, others for business, others for war, others for advancement of fortune, others for love, others for the arts, others for a varied kind of life," etc. De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.

Of those formed for love Romeo is a notable example. His character stands high with those who know him; even his professed enemy, old Capulet, says:—

"Verona brags of him  
To be a virtuous and *well-governed* youth."

This, in one respect, is a mistaken judgment, for Romeo is



especially liable to allow his emotions to run into excess; but as he is honorable, refined, and unstained by any coarse vice, he no doubt in his outward deportment justifies Capulet's good opinion. He possesses, moreover, an active mind and ready wit, through which he can be gay and companionable when he forces himself to it; but naturally he is prone to melancholy and foreboding: he seems averse to reflection and made for passion alone. With an acute sensibility and excitable imagination he also feels a craving of the heart and a yearning for sympathy; he is a lover by nature, and having met Rosaline, a proud, cold beauty, who refuses totally to listen to his suit, he uses her as a lay figure, as it were, on which to hang the drapery of his imagination and sentiment, and thus construct an ideal, of which the beauty excites his admiration and the cruelty his groans. This enables him to fancy himself the most miserable of men. But both his love and his sorrow are factitious, as can be seen in the activity of his fancy in the invention of far-fetched conceits and quibbles with which he expresses the extremity of his woe. There is not a single genuine note of simple feeling in all that he says; it is an effort of the mind to keep up a particular style, out of which, nevertheless, he is constantly dropping into a natural tone, whenever any little incident calls off his attention. He says to Benvolio, who asks:—

“Why, Romeo, are you mad?”

*Rom.* Not mad, but bound more than a madman is;  
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,  
Whipp'd and tormented — *Good e'en, good fellow.*”

[*To servant who enters.*]

And again he says:—

“Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still,  
Should without eyes find pathways to his will.  
*Where shall we dine?*”

The well-balanced Benvolio, in a good-natured and friendly way, rebukes Romeo for his infatuation in giving up his judgment entirely to his imagination, and assures him that if he would “examine other beauties” he would cease to idealize Rosaline, and would rid himself of the grief he experiences on account of her cruelty. But Romeo stands fast to his ideal.

The following is their conversation, which, as it strongly marks Romeo's disposition and subjection to his imagination, is put in

rhymes, some of them alternate, a special style which calls attention to its matter. Benvolio says :—

“ At this same ancient feast of Capulet’s  
 Sups the fair Rosaline, whom thou so lov’st,  
 With all the admired beauties of Verona :  
 Go thither, and, *with unattainted eye,*  
*Compare her face with some that I shall show,*  
*And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.*  
*Rom.* When the devout religion of mine eye  
 Maintains such falsehoods, then turn tears to fires.  
 And these, who, often drown’d, could never die,  
 Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars.  
*One fairer than my love ! the all-seeing sun*  
*Ne’er saw her match, since first the world begun.*  
*Ben.* Tut, tut ! *you saw her fair, none else being by,*  
 Herself pois’d with herself, in either eye ;  
 But in those crystal scales, *let there be weigh’d*  
*Your lady’s love against some other maid*  
*That I will shew you, shining at this feast,*  
*And she shall shew scant well, that now shews best.*  
*Rom.* I’ll go along, *no such sight to be shown ;*  
 But to rejoice in splendour of mine own.”

Act I. Sc. 2.

In acting his part Romeo spares no pains, and no doubt considers himself utterly wretched ; but his love requires artificial stimulus. In a passage already quoted, we have seen that he passes the night in the solitary forest in tears and groans, and when day returns he locks himself in a dark chamber, where he may nurse his sorrow ; not that he is insincere, but self-deceived, a victim of his temperament and imagination.

Romeo’s want of mental balance and his consequent haste in matters affecting his feelings appear in his words to Friar Laurence, whose assent he has just obtained to marry him to Juliet, —

“ O let us hence : *I stand on sudden haste,*” —

to which the Friar subjoins the true rule, —

“ *Wisely and slow ; they stumble that run fast.*”

With all Romeo’s brilliant and lovable qualities, he has obvious defects of temper and judgment, growing out of his emotional nature, owing to which he becomes rash, impatient of advice, and in the end so desperate and reckless of consequences that for a time he is a *quasi-madman*.

Romeo is not only an idealist, he is also a fatalist; he has a deep inherent conviction that the stars in their courses fight against him; that he is born to sorrow and an untimely end. He says, with a seeming resignation to the will of Heaven:—

“He, that hath the steerage of my course,  
Direct my sail.”

But as he exerts neither will nor judgment in the choice of a prudent course, this is simply saying that he trusts himself to the current of events. Young and inexperienced as he is, he may, while indulging his hopeless passion, be pardoned for imagining himself utterly miserable, although the effort it costs him to invent ingenious reasons to prove love a tyrant, and himself a victim, is conclusive that his woe is both superficial and artificial; but at other times he has profound misgivings and real presentiments that impart to his soul something of prophetic power, as when, yielding to the entreaties of his friends, he consents, against his better judgment, to visit the ball at the Capulet mansion; although to enter this house may well give him forebodings, for he does it at the risk of his life, and, in fact, is only saved by a passing mood of good humor and hospitality, on the part of the hot-headed old Capulet. Romeo says:—

“My mind misgives  
*Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,*  
*Shall bitterly begin his fearful date*  
*With this night's revels ; and expire the term*  
*Of a despised life, clos'd in my breast*  
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.”

This is such a foreboding as is classed by Bacon as Natural Divination, or “a presage from an inward presentiment of the mind;” and is an excellent and apt illustration of that doctrine.

At the first sight of Juliet, Romeo discovers that in worshipping Rosaline he has been burning incense to a false ideal. He is enraptured with Juliet's beauty, and exclaims with genuine emotion:—

“O she doth teach the torches to burn bright !  
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night  
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear :  
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear !” etc.

Here are no quips nor quibbles; his words are straight to the point and glow with feeling, and he adds:—



“Did my heart love till now? *Forswear it, sight!*  
*For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night.*”

Act I. Sc. 5.

This is an unquestionable example of an “immaterial virtue,” or the power of “the rays of things” to move the feelings.

An equally sudden passion springs up in Juliet towards him. He seeks her side, and, with a graceful and reverent courtesy, begs — a kiss; which, with mingled archness and demureness, is accorded. From the first glance, they look into each other’s minds and understand each other’s feelings; but at this first meeting, they have never before seen or heard of each other; they are total strangers, neither of them knowing the name, family, condition, or disposition of the other. In such a case of sudden and mutual attraction, there can be no admiration of character, no intellectual sympathy, no moral element whatever; it is a matter wholly of the eye, and the force of physical beauty to influence the imagination and feelings; it is an instance of magnetic attraction; they *fascinate* each other, or, as the chorus puts it, they are “alike *bewitched by the charm of looks,*” and both are ready to overleap all law and custom that may stand in the way of their marriage and union: both, moreover, are idealists, first, by nature, and then doubly so by passion; and being endowed with quick sensibilities and vivid imaginations they exalt each other’s perfections to the highest pitch, though the models they create in their minds are almost exclusively sensuous, in which the only moral excellence that finds a place is truth and fidelity to pledges. To Romeo, Juliet’s cheek and eyes shame the brightness of the stars, and if they were placed in heaven, he says, her eyes

“Would through the airy region stream so bright  
 That birds would sing and think it were not night;” —

and he envies even the fly, that can seize

“On the white wonder of dear Juliet’s hand,  
 And steal immortal blessings from her lips,” —

while to Juliet, Romeo is “a mortal paradise of sweet flesh;” “a day in night;” and if he were cut out in little stars he would

“Make the face of heaven so fine,  
 That all the world would be in love with night,  
 And pay no worship to the garish sun.”

Their love, in short, is a matter of temperament and the blood ; but they are young, beautiful, true, and pure-minded ; and they idealize their intense and burning passion, and lift it into the sphere of delicacy and tenderness of sentiment and beautify it with the most exquisite hyperboles of poetry. They meet at the Friar's cell for the purpose of marriage, and pour out their ardor in words that seem to sweeten the air they are spoken in, but are interrupted by the Friar, who is evidently not without experience in such matters, and who exclaims : —

“ Come, come with me and we will make short work,  
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone  
Till holy church incorporate two in one.”

That which throws a special interest over the lovers is their own misgiving that their passion must lead to a fatal result. Although of marriageable years, they are very young ; they are not yet emerged from adolescence, but are still in tutelage, Juliet being but fourteen, and Romeo (according to the old story) but twenty ; and it is noteworthy that the dramatist has reduced the sixteen years given to Juliet by Brooke's poem (on which the play is founded) to the more immature fourteen years of the play. The poet seems clearly to have wished to impress us with the inexperience of these young people, and the need they have of advice and counsel. They are in a measure relieved from moral responsibility by being represented as innocent sacrifices to the hate of “ the houses.” Their passion springs up so suddenly that they have no time for reflection, and although they are aware that they are taking a step most repugnant to the feelings of parents and friends, yet they can make no resistance, but only utter the deep premonition they each feel that it will be fatal. Romeo, when told that the maiden whose beauty had so entranced him was the sole daughter of Capulet, the bitter enemy of his family, says : —

“ Is she a Capulet ?  
O dear account ! *my life is my foe's debt !*”

And Juliet, who had previously whispered to her heart the fear, —

“ If he be married  
My grave is like to be my wedding bed,” —

is, upon hearing the truth, dismayed at the perilous relations that

must grow out of a love so antagonized by hate, and utters a deep misgiving : —

“ My only love sprung from my only hate !  
*Too early seen unknown and known too late !*  
*Prodigious birth of love it is to me,*  
*That I must love a loathed enemy.”*

It is the doctrine of this piece that before action we should endeavor to foresee the consequences of our course. This can be done only with any confidence by “ Artificial Divination,” or reasoning from causes to effects. This prudence Romeo is remarkably deficient in, not through a want of ability to reason, but because he is swept away by a tide of passion that does not permit him to question what may follow ; he has, however, a natural divination through which the forebodings of his mind hit correctly, though vaguely, on results ; as in the deep apprehension he feels on entering the Capulet mansion, which is not through any feeling of personal peril, but because he has a prescience that the step will be followed by some fearful mishap. Of a like nature is the feeling which, as he is walking by the Capulet garden after the ball, leads him to say, —

“ Can I go forward when my heart is here ?  
*Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out,”* —

and leaps the garden wall in order to find, if possible, an opportunity of speaking with Juliet.

It may be noted that the metaphor which Romeo here uses is taken from that class (the *fourth* above mentioned) of “ immaterial virtues,” in which the attraction of the earth is placed, such attraction being supposed to reside *in its centre*.

Romeo is fortunate in finding Juliet on her balcony, and, having obtained from her a confession that she reciprocates his love, he hastens away to Friar Laurence in order to persuade him to perform a secret marriage. The good priest, in the hope of reconciling the warring factions represented by the lovers, consents and invokes the favorable aspect of the heavens in order that the consequences may prove fortunate.

“ *So smile the heavens upon this holy act,*  
*That after hours with sorrow chide us not.”*

Whereat Romeo’s impatient passion breaks forth with this “ extremity ” of thought and feeling : —



"Amen, amen ! but come what sorrow can,  
 It cannot countervail the exchange of joy  
 That one short minute gives me in her sight :  
 Do thou but close our hands with holy words,  
 Then *love-devouring death do what he dare,*  
*It is enough I may but call her mine.*"

At this extravagance the Friar raises his voice of warning : —

"These violent delights have violent ends  
 And in their triumph die ; like fire and powder,  
 Which, as they kiss, consume. . . .  
 Therefore, *love moderately ; long love doth so ;*  
*Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.*"

After his banishment for killing Tybalt — the Prince having commuted the sentence of death to exile, which latter is by no means an irremediable evil — Romeo takes refuge in Friar Laurence's cell and literally abandons himself to despair. Instead of seeing a mercy in the milder punishment, he considers it a torture worse than death ; it separates him from Juliet and he refuses to be comforted. He says : —

"Heaven is here  
 Where Juliet lives ; and every cat and dog  
 And little mouse, every unworthy thing,  
 Live here in heaven and may look on her ;  
 But Romeo may not."

Act III. Sc. 3.

Life without her presence is simply intolerable ; it is "purgatory, torture, hell itself." Overwhelmed with the word "banishment," he rejects all advice. The Friar tells him, —

"I'll give thee armour to keep off that word ;  
 Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,  
 To comfort thee, though thou art banished ;" —

that is, he will coolly look at the case and calculate the many encouraging chances of the future, but Romeo lives only in the present ; his passion knows no future and spurns philosophy.

"Hang up philosophy !  
 Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,  
 Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom,  
 It helps not, it prevails not, talk no more."

And he throws himself upon the ground, where deaf to entreaties and heedless alike of his own safety and that of his confessor, whose welfare he is endangering, he refuses to arise, until hearing

from the Nurse, who enters, — and who rebukes him for his want of manliness, — the piteous plight of Juliet, he springs up, and drawing his sword, is about to commit suicide when the Friar seizes his hand, and, dropping his tone of kindness and pity, denounces in the severest terms his want of sense and fortitude.

“ Hold thy desperate hand :  
 Art thou a man ? thy form cries out thou art ;  
 Thy tears are womanish ; thy wild acts denote  
 The unreasonable fury of a beast :  
 Unseemly woman in a seeming man !  
 An ill-beseeming beast in seeming both !  
 Thou hast amaz'd me : by my holy order,  
 I thought thy disposition better temper'd ; ” —

and then goes on to point out to him the many reasons he has for self-congratulation, and for supposing his banishment will be of short duration.

The tone of the Friar towards Romeo is that of an experienced preceptor towards a pupil — he calls Romeo his “ pupil ” — whom he loves, whose misery he pities, whose inexperience he pardons, and whose errors he seeks to correct, all the more for the many noble qualities that go with them. Romeo and Juliet are not adults who are expected to think and act for themselves ; they are young persons, whose passions are more mature than their judgments, and who, through immoderate desire, anticipate the period of free action.

After Romeo hears of Juliet's death he stays not to ponder the event ; it does not surprise him ; his forebodings have whispered it to him ; “ the day's black fate ” he has so long anticipated has arrived, and nothing can touch him further. He simply says : —

“ Is it even so : then *I defy you, stars !* ” —

The occasion gives him concentration, purpose, dignity ; and he rises to that stature of manhood of which he had previously fallen so far short. He at once seeks for the means of sudden death, —

“ Such soon-speeding gear  
 That the *life-weary taker may fall dead ;* ” —

and he recalls a prophetic suggestion, which the sight of a certain needy apothecary had awakened in his mind and of whom he had thought, —

“ An if a man did need a poison now,  
 Here lives the catiff wretch will sell it him.”

With this poison procured he hurries to Verona; he stops not to obtain further information, he seeks no interview with the Friar, but presses forward to the end with the most desperate haste, slaying Paris, who crosses him at the tomb; and after breaking open the sepulchre and taking a farewell embrace, and a last look at Juliet's beauty, which even in death makes to his eyes the dim "vault a feasting-presence full of light," he drinks off the poison with a precipitancy which alone prevents his discovering the true state of the facts from the Friar, who immediately after enters. Throughout, the character is marked by a haste and impatience due to the predominance in his disposition of passion and willfulness over reason, which latter requires that we should carefully look into the causes of the events taking place around us in order that we may trace their probable effects. This course, this "observation of the hour," which is the same as the "artificial divination" of Bacon, and which, as we have seen, is the rule of the play, enables one to forecast the future on rational grounds; but this moderation does not belong to Romeo, whose career verifies the wisdom of the Friar's words: —

"Two such opposèd foes encamp them still  
In man as well as herbs, — grace and *rude will*;  
And, where *the worser is predominant*,  
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant."

Juliet has been educated in the belief that the marriage of a daughter is properly managed by the parent, and on her first introduction she is ready to accept as a suitor whomsoever her father shall select. At this time, she is perfectly fancy-free; marriage is "an honor she has dreamed not of." She is filial, obedient, respectful, and leans, child-like, on the older ones around her, particularly the Nurse, for advice and instruction. To the proposition that she accept the County Paris as a husband and also to her mother's high-flown and figurative eulogy of his beauty and merits, she modestly replies, —

"I'll look to like, if looking liking move,  
But no more deep will I endart mine eye  
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly."

Nothing can be more dutiful; but when she doubtingly says, "I'll look to like, if *looking liking move*," she reveals her profound ignorance of the power of the eye and the aspect over the feelings. No sooner does she meet Romeo and exchange glances



with him than she is sensible that he is her predestined lover and the ruler of her fate.

With all her sensibility and imagination, Juliet has great balance of character; she has will, forethought, and truth; at the same time is confiding, passionate, and capable of deep duplicity; yet these opposite qualities are so tempered that no one of them overbears the others so far as to rule the character. Docile and placing the utmost trust in her counselors, she develops, as soon as she finds that her trust is betrayed, a fund of energy and self-support that easily exalt her conduct to heroism.

Her ready use of evasion is set down among the earliest revelations of her character: the Nurse at the ball overhears Juliet's comment on the incongruity of her loving passionately the enemy of her house and breaks in upon her with "What's this? what's this?" — an inquiry which Juliet quietly parries with a quick evasion, —

" A rhyme I learn'd e'en now  
Of one I danced withal."

This latent craft becomes prominently developed in her future conduct, but she uses it as a shield to protect herself and not as a weapon to injure others. While to her lover she is frank, ingenuous, and removed as far as possible from all coquetry, she practices a deep dissimulation towards her parents, who show her no kindness, treat her with no sympathy, heed no remonstrance, but cruelly and brutally attempt to force upon her a husband against her will.

Juliet has something of Romeo's foreboding; she has the same sense of approaching calamity, but her fears proceed from her higher reasoning powers. As ardently passionate as Romeo, she is much superior in self-control; her mind is far better balanced than his; she is willing to take counsel and weigh the circumstances under which she is acting. She intuitively perceives that a course so contrary to law and custom as the one she and her lover are pursuing must necessarily lead to some untoward issue. In the garden scene, immediately after their mutual avowals, she says, —

" Although I joy in thee  
I have no joy of this contract to-night :  
It is *too rash*, *too unadvis'd*, *too sudden* ;  
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be  
Ere one can say — it lightens."

Act II. Sc. 2.

And subsequently at the parting from Romeo on the morning he starts for Mantua, she says, looking down at him from her window, —

“O God ! I have an *ill-divining* soul ;  
Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,  
As *one dead in the bottom of a tomb* !  
Either my eye-sight fails or thou look'st pale.  
*Rom.* And trust me, love, in my eye so do you :  
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu ! adieu !”

This is another instance of Bacon's Natural Divination “that forms a presage from an inward presentiment without the help of signs.”

It is a presage, too, which is literally fulfilled, for neither of the lovers ever after sees the other except as “one dead in the bottom of a tomb.”

Juliet's will, moreover, is not so exclusively under the influence of passion as his ; she has far more of “grace” than of “rude will ;” she will not listen to his vows unless they are ratified by marriage, but once she has plighted her troth and become his wife, she will walk the whole circle of horrors but that she will live “an unstained wife to her sweet lord.”

Her courage and constancy are put to much severer tests than any he undergoes. Her hot-headed old father is resolved that she shall marry the County Paris and he thus threatens her with the consequences of her refusal :—

“Settle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next,  
To go with Paris to St. Peter's church,  
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither :  
Out, you green-sickness carrion ! out, you baggage !  
You tallow-face ! . . .  
An you will not wed, I'll 'pardon' you :  
Graze where thou wilt, you shall not house with me :  
*Look to 't, think on 't, I do not use to jest :*  
*Thursday is near : lay hand on heart, advise :*  
An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend ;  
An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die i' the street,  
For by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,  
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good,  
Trust to 't, *bethink you, I'll not be forsworn.*”

Act III. Sc. 5.

This is passion enjoining the practice of philosophy. Capulet vents his wrath by forcing on Juliet “the observation of the hour” or the consideration of consequences.

In her distress, Juliet turns to her mother and appeals to her in words of deepest pathos.

“O sweet my mother, cast me not away !  
 Delay this marriage for a month, a week :  
 Or if you do not, make the bridal bed  
 In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.”

But this cold and rancorous woman says repulsively, —

“Talk not to me, for I’ll not speak a word ;  
 Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.”

As a last resort she turns to the Nurse, who is in the secret of her marriage, and whose affection has always been to her a refuge and a comfort, and says : —

“O nurse, how shall this be prevented ?  
 My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven ;  
 How shall that faith return again to earth,  
 Unless that husband send it me from heaven  
 By leaving earth ? *Comfort me, counsel me, —*  
 . . . . .  
 What say’st thou ? hast thou not a word of joy ?  
*Some comfort, nurse.*”

Act III. Sc. 5.

But neither the moral exigency of the situation nor Juliet’s truth of soul are within the comprehension of this shallow-minded, time-serving creature. And no doubt she is quite sincere in advising Juliet to marry the Count on the ground that, Romeo being an exile, he is unable to return and challenge her action, while such a course will smooth over every difficulty (besides saving her own bones for the part she has played in the secret marriage), and in order to commend this advice to Juliet’s acceptance she heartily praises Paris and at the same time disparages Romeo. Nothing could be more timely for Juliet’s good than this advice ; its utter turpitude and the vulgarity and shallowness of mind it discloses raise Juliet’s intensest scorn, and develop in her a strength of soul which converts her from a confiding girl into a self-reliant heroine. She now feels perfectly self-assured, for, deserted by all others, she knows that she carries the means of escape in the dagger which she holds. She is ready to die, but first she will seek the Friar to know his remedy. She says : —

“Go, counsellor ;  
 Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.  
 I’ll to the friar to know his remedy ;  
 If all else fail, *myself have power to die.*”



The Friar, who is anxious that the marriage of the lovers should not be made known until an opportune time, proposes to Juliet a plan calculated to test all her nerve and strength of mind. It is that of taking a sleeping-draught, under the influence of which she will apparently die and be entombed, with the understanding that Romeo will be present at her waking and bear her to a place of safety. She assents, but upon taking the draught in the solitude of her chamber, both reason and imagination suggest to her the consequences that may ensue, especially the possibility of her awaking in the tomb before aid should reach her. Her imagination becomes affrighted with the images it conjures up, until to her half-frenzied mind the murdered Tybalt starts from his shroud, and, sword in hand, seeks Romeo to slay him. So powerfully does her imagination act upon her sense that the vision of her mind takes corporeal substance and *visibility for the eye*, and she actually *sees* her cousin, as if living. She cries:—

“O look ! *methinks I see my cousin's ghost*  
*Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body*  
*Upon a rapier's point.”*

But her love for Romeo and her wish to aid him is a stronger impulse than her fears, and she adds:—

“Stay, Tybalt, stay !  
 Romeo, I come ; this do *I drink to thee*.

This is a fine example of Bacon's doctrine of “Fascination” in that branch of it that treats of “the *power of the imagination upon the body of the imaginant.*” De Aug. Book V. ch. i. and iii.

Juliet's trust is simply infinite. She carries out all her part of the Friar's plan with unfaltering constancy, and is only defeated of her hopes by the rashness of her lover, and when all else fails she has, as she has previously told us, the power to die. Left alone in the sepulchre, the Friar having withdrawn, and Romeo lying dead at her feet, she espies, by what she considers a happy chance, Romeo's dagger, and, seizing it, at once stabs herself, exclaiming:—

“O happy dagger !  
 This is thy sheath ; there rust and let me die.”  
*[Falls on ROMEO's body and dies.*

Whatever be their faults, this youthful couple are certainly noble in the proofs they give of their trust and of their fidelity to themselves and to each other, and they die with a heroism and a magnanimity which has been the admiration of the world so far as to make the legend of their love the most famous, perhaps, of any in the long catalogue of the stories of star-crossed lovers.

The foregoing skeleton-sketch of these characters gives no hint of their power and beauty as dramatic and poetic creations; its aim is only to show their relations to the organic law of the piece, which, being "the form" of a horoscope, or the observation of causes from which to predict consequences, is, as has been pointed out, identical with the Artificial Divination of Bacon, or, in other words, the exercise of judgment and foresight in the affairs of life. In this respect there is a wide difference between these lovers: of the two, Juliet is the superior; her strong reason perceives distinctly that their course is erroneous and hazardous, but the full stream of pleasurable emotion that has, as if by magic, commenced its flow in her heart, prevents her listening to any misgivings or promptings of prudence; besides, she acts with the sanction of her confessor, while in Romeo there seems to be hardly the faculty of forethought, and, indeed, he is so overmastered by willful passion that he comes near to losing our respect and sympathy. But his youth, his sincerity, and his heroic fidelity to his love win back both admiration and pardon.

Most of the other characters of the piece are distinguished more by personal temperament than by depth of nature. They each have some predominant bias in their dispositions. Old Capulet, for instance, is a hot-headed, irascible man, arbitrary and willful, with quick turns of feeling, and is governed by impulse. Like most men of high temper, he has two sides to his character, which are almost always in extremes, and strongly contrast with one another. When nothing ruffles him he is exceedingly cheerful and pleasant, but at the least opposition to his will he flies into a violent passion, which expends itself in voluble and vulgar abuse. In his hospitality he is loud and jovial, though coarse in manner. He is entitled, however, to the praise of sincerity; he disguises no feeling, but is simply wrong-headed, and gauges everything by a judgment terribly warped by an arbitrary and violent nature. His headlong and impatient temper is ludicrously manifested in his rushing in at the noise of the street fray

with which the play opens, "in his gown," and without a weapon, and then, in the thick of the *mêlée*, shouting for his "long sword" to be brought him.

In his reply to Paris, who solicits him for the hand of his daughter, Juliet, he is, at first, entirely fair-minded; he insists that Juliet is too young to marry, and advises Paris not to decide on marriage until he had compared Juliet with other ladies, and urges him to be present at the Capulet feast that night, when he could have an opportunity of seeing many "fresh female buds," telling him:—

At my poor house, look to behold this night  
Earth-treading stars, that make dark heaven light.

Hear all, all see  
And like her most, whose merit most shall be," etc.

Act I. Sc. 2.

He expressly tells Paris that he leaves Juliet to her own independent choice.

"My will to her consent is but a part;  
An she agree, within her scope of choice  
Lies my consent and fair according voice," etc.

And yet within a few hours the whim seizes him, and, without consulting Juliet, he promises her hand to Paris, and then threatens her with poverty, starvation, death in the streets, unless she marry off-hand at his bidding.

In making this match, Capulet has some misgivings himself whether Juliet will assent. He says:—

"Sir Paris, I will make a *desperate* tender  
Of my child's love. *I think she will be rul'd*  
*In all respects by me*; nay, more, I doubt it not," etc.

This doubt renders his subsequent violence all the more unreasonable, but his conduct makes more probable Juliet's readiness to take the sleeping-draught, and excuses in a measure her duplicity.

Capulet's coarse mind and manners, which are natural to him and are relieved occasionally by a vein of courtesy, the result of his social position, are in contrast with Montague's. Of the latter person we see but little, but that little suffices to show him a refined and courtly gentleman.



There is a similar contrast between Lady Montague and Lady Capulet. The former is so much attached to her son Romeo that on his banishment she dies of broken heart ; while Lady Capulet exhibits scarce a trace of emotional feeling, except a slight utterance of grief at Juliet's supposed death ; on the other hand, when Juliet makes to her the most piteous supplication that she delay the marriage with Paris, this proud and deadly woman — for she is familiar with the bowl and the dagger — turns coldly away with a most repulsive want of sympathy.

The part of Mercutio is to laugh at the exaggerations of the idealist and unveil the sensual basis of that love that has its source in the eye and the witchery of personal beauty. This he does in a gay but gross manner. He seems desirous (aside from the mere irrepressible ebullience of his mercurial temperament) of jeering Romeo out of his nonsense and teaching him that he is cheated by his imagination. After a trial between them as to whose wit and fancy can longest keep up a jingle of words and play of conceits, he says : “ Why, is not this better than groaning for love ? Now art thou Romeo ? now art thou what thou art by art as well as by nature,” etc.

Mercutio is a stout upholder of old customs ; his chief reason for disliking Tybalt is that Tybalt fights by book of arithmetic, and with his “ passado ” and “ punto ” and “ reverso,” has sought to change the good old-fashioned way of fighting when reliance was placed solely on quickness of eye and hand.

He thus laughs at Romeo's idealism : —

“ Now is he for the numbers Petrarch flow'd in ; Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen-wench ; — marry, she had a better love to berhyme her ; Dido, a dowdy ; Cleopatra, a gipsy ; Helen and Hero, hildings and harlots ; Thisbe, a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose,” etc. Act II. Sc. 4.

Tybalt typifies the most virulent partisan hate. He is of a martial temperament and savage disposition, a professed duelist, fond of combat and distinguished for his skill with the rapier. He finds Benvolio endeavoring to suppress a tumult between the adherents of the two houses, and at once commences a quarrel.

“ Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

*Ben.* I do but keep the peace ; put up thy sword  
Or manage it to part these men with me.

*Tyb.* What, drawn and talk of peace ! I hate the word  
As I hate hell, all Montagues and thee.”

Tybalt detects Romeo's presence at the Capulet feast by his *voice*, and the *sound* moves his bitterest wrath.

"*Tyb. This by his voice* should be a Montague :  
Fetch me my rapier, boy. What ! dares the slave  
Come hither, cover'd with an antick face  
To flee and scorn at our solemnity ? " etc.

Tybalt cannot but suppose that Romeo is there in an unfriendly spirit ; but this is a gross misconception of the fact (for Romeo is there through his love for Rosaline). This error, which proceeds from the ambiguity of sights and sounds and Tybalt's hasty conclusion, has most malign consequences, for Tybalt, who is about to take summary vengeance, is checked by old Capulet, who, having heard Romeo favorably spoken of, and happening just then to be in a cheerful mood, absolutely forbids Tybalt from dishonoring the hospitality of his house by molesting Romeo. This deepens Tybalt's resentment, and he lays up his hate for another day. He says :—

"*Patience, perforce with wilful choler meeting*  
*Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.*  
I will withdraw ; but *this intrusion* shall  
Now *seeming sweet, convert to bitter gall.*"

These words breathe deliberate hate and revenge ; they foretoken a deadly outcome. Immediately after his secret marriage, Romeo encounters Tybalt, who openly professes his hate and insults him with vile epithets, but Romeo, who now looks upon Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, as his own kinsman, replies with gentle words, and assures him that he tenders the name of Capulet as dearly as his own. Mercutio, who is present and who has a strong personal dislike of Tybalt, mistaking (in his ignorance of Romeo's marriage) his aspect and manner for "a dishonorable, vile submission," draws on Tybalt and forces him to fight, as it were, in self-defense. Romeo endeavors to come between them in order to keep the peace, and through his interference Mercutio receives a mortal thrust. He retains, however, his constitutional flow of humor, and utters dying words which prove to be a fatal prophecy, —

"*A plague o' both your houses !*  
They have made worms' meat of me.  
I have it, and soundly, too — your houses ! "

Mercutio is led away, and Romeo has hardly time to lament the incongruous position in which he is placed between Juliet's love and the hatred of her kinsfolk, which subjects him to imputations on his honor and courage, exclaiming, —

“O sweet Juliet  
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate  
And in my temper softened valour's steel” —

when Benvolio returns and announces the death of Mercutio. This brings upon Romeo one of those deep presentiments to which his soul is subject, and which so well illustrate the doctrine of *Natural Divination*.

“This day's black fate on more days doth depend ;  
This but begins the woe, others must end.”

Tybalt at this juncture returns. The concurrence proves too much for Romeo's self-command. Passion is uppermost, and he retorts to Tybalt :—

“Rom. Alive ! in triumph ! and Mercutio slain !

. . . . .  
Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again  
That late thou gav'st me ; for Mercutio's soul  
Is but a little way above our heads,  
Staying for thine to keep him company :  
Or thou or I or both must go with him.  
*Tyb.* Thou wretched boy, that didst consort him here  
Shalt with him thence,” etc. [*They fight.* TYBALT falls.

Notwithstanding Tybalt's great skill, he is apparently run through at the first lunge. Fate guides Romeo's arm, and the skillful fencer, in all the flush of vigorous manhood, falls before the weapon of a “boy.” This is the turning-point in Romeo's career ; his life's vista, which had been so bright, is now shrouded in a gloom which is never again lifted. The death of Mercutio evidently grows out of the antagonism of love and hate produced by Romeo's secret marriage. Had Romeo been able to disclose to his friends (without endangering Juliet's liberty) the fact that he had married her, all the tragic issues that followed had been avoided. It is one of the most important links in that nexus of facts, that underrun the surface of the play and cause the different characters to misjudge entirely the true aspect of events as they happen, leading in each case to disastrous errors, and showing how futile and even dangerous it is to decide upon ambiguous



sights and sounds unless we take into consideration the concomitants: a fact which emphasizes the necessity of investigating the true nature of things and arriving at their causes before action is taken under their influence.

As the ribaldry of Mercutio heightens by contrast the idealism of Romeo, so the vulgarity of the Nurse places in relief the refinement of Juliet. The character of the Nurse was taken from Brooke's poem, but was greatly altered and modified to make it fit well its place in the play. In thought and speech, her manners or rather her mannerisms are the product of custom and routine; she is stamped with the peculiarities of her calling. Her pet names for Juliet, her familiar style with her superiors, her intimate association with the private affairs of the household, show her as an old and confidential retainer, who, through long service, has become incorporated, as it were, into the family, by whom, notwithstanding her garrulity and ignorance, she is tolerated on account of her special and intimate relations with Juliet. She is, moreover, obsequious, and commends herself by a low craft and flattery, but is utterly without principle or prudence. She lends herself without scruple to Juliet's scheme of a clandestine marriage and to the stolen interviews of the lovers; nor does she hesitate, after Romeo's banishment, to advise Juliet to marry Paris as an admirable stroke of policy, contending that it may safely be done, as Romeo, being an exile, cannot call her to account for her action. The utter baseness of such a step never occurs to her. Juliet is amazed and breaks out with the passionate exclamation:

“Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend!” —

but the Nurse herself is too shallow both in thought and feeling to comprehend the iniquity of such a course, much less forecast its consequences. Her morality and conscience are satisfied if appearances are preserved; in other words, she is wholly superficial and governed by the occasion, while in moments of deeper trouble and grief, she invariably finds solace in her cup of *aqua vitae*; in all which she is apparently a negative of “the form.”

Her views of love and marriage are altogether practical and professional, and her remarks on these points may almost vie for plainness of speech with those of Mercutio himself. She is the prose version of Juliet's romance; and is used, like Mercutio, to keep before the mind the physical basis of that love which

originates in the magnetism of beauty. This æsthetic counter-balance to the sublimated ecstasies of the lovers appears even in the expression of Capulet's grief for Juliet's death and in Romeo's last words in her tomb. And it would appear that the poet himself, whose insight is never disturbed by the glow of his imagination, suggests by his mode of managing his work how greatly the lovers exaggerate each other's merits and perfections; seen, as they are, by them through the illusory haze of a romantic passion; yet he lets fall no word that can impeach the singleness and purity of their purpose or impair the beauty of their trust and devotion, much less detract from the noble self-sacrifice with which they throw away their lives for their truth.

This love, moreover, is typical of one of the cardinal facts of human nature, a portrayal of which could not be omitted in a drama that treats of the more important phenomena in the philosophy of Man; and viewed strictly on moral instead of artistic grounds, the subject is seen to be treated with perfect integrity and fairness, for while the poet awakens our deepest sympathy for the unfortunate lovers, and commends their passion to the imagination by the wealth and profusion of beauty and poetry with which he surrounds it, he in no way relaxes the severity of his judgment with respect to their willfulness and imprudence.

Friar Laurence may be considered the moral centre of the piece, embodying that wisdom, or, in Juliet's phrase, "that long-experienced time," which enables its possessor to give counsel in the emergencies of life; and this is his function in the play; he represents "the form" or that counsel that points out the consequences of a particular line of conduct; but he has his limitations, which, as is almost always the case with Shakespeare's ideals when embodied in characters, bring him within the imperfections of human nature, and make him dramatic and natural. Wise and prudent as he is he is nevertheless baffled in the execution of his schemes by the trivial and unforeseen accidents of the external world, — a common result in attempts of secret cunning and imposture, since in such attempts the single human mind enters the lists against the world's mass of things. Another cause, however, coöperated with external circumstances to overthrow his calculations, and that cause lay in the character of Romeo himself, whose hasty and unconsidered action was that which brought ruin upon himself and upon all he loved and all that loved him.



In casting a horoscope from observation of the human world instead of the heavenly sphere, the aspects of men and women and the friendship and enmity they manifest take the place of the irradiations of the stars; and to objects of sight are added also sounds as being of the same class of "immaterial virtues," of which the most potential to influence the passions are words, especially the names bestowed on objects of love or hatred. An obvious instance of a sound to move either love or hate, without reference to the real nature of that to which it is applied, is a party name, — as *Capulet* or *Montague*, — which at once excites the animosity of the opposing faction and the good-will of its own.

A sound to move love is the name of the beloved object. As Juliet says: —

"Every tongue that speaks  
But *Romeo's* name speaks heavenly eloquence."

The garden scene is famous for its exquisite portrayal of the avowals of a mutual passion, and is looked upon as a sort of an attar, into which is condensed the sweetness of infinite love confessions; but if we examine it we find that much of its power is derived from the examples it presents of the influence of sounds over the feelings.

And first we note that Juliet, with her strong sense that triumphs over partisan feeling, brushes aside the sophistry that grows out of the ambiguity of sounds that through the influence of a hostile name would excite hate for an object worthy of love.

"O *Romeo*, *Romeo* ! wherefore art thou *Romeo* ?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy name ;  
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a *Capulet*.

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.  
Thou art thyself though, not a *Montague*.  
What's *Montague* ? it is nor hand nor foot,  
Nor arm nor face, nor any other part.  
What's in a name ? that which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet ;  
So *Romeo* would, were he not *Romeo* call'd,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title : — *Romeo*, doff thy name,\*  
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.



*Rom.* I take thee at thy word ;  
*Call me but love and I'll be new baptis'd ;*  
*Henceforth I never will be Romeo.*

*Jul.* What man art thou, that thus bescreen'd in night,  
 So stumbl'st on my counsel ?

*Rom.* *By a name*  
*I know not how to tell thee who I am ;*  
*My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself*  
*Because it is an enemy to thee ;*  
*Had I it written I would tear the word.*

*Jul.* My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words  
 Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound ;  
 Art thou not Romeo and a Montague ?

*Rom.* *Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike," etc.*

After bidding Romeo "good-night," and as he is slowly retiring, Juliet reënters, and again makes expression of her love by the fondness with which she dwells upon Romeo's name.

*"Hist ! Romeo, hist ! O for a falconer's voice*  
*To lure this tassel-gentle back again !*  
*Bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud ;*  
*Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,*  
*And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine*  
*With repetition of my Romeo's name.*  
*Rom.* *It is my soul that calls upon my name ;*  
*How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night*  
*Like softest music to attending ears !"*

Among sounds that particularly affect the feelings are shrieks and cries, which proceed themselves from emotion ; so the shouts of angry citizens, as for "clubs, bills, and partisans !" may be noted ; also calls that interrupt some interesting flow of emotion, such as the Nurse's call from "within" while Romeo and Juliet are taking leave of each other. Another instance, which appears purposely marked, is "the knocking" at the door of the Friar's cell (Act III. Sc. 3) while the Friar is remonstrating with Romeo for his willfulness in not concealing himself. It serves to show how far passion has carried him beyond good feeling and good sense.

The most powerful instance, perhaps, in the play of the effect of a sound upon the feelings is that of the word "*banished*" upon both Juliet and Romeo.

Juliet thus descants upon it : —

*"Some word there was worser than Tybalt's death,*  
*That murder'd me : I would forget it fain ;*

But oh ! it presses to my memory  
 Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds !  
 'Tybalt is dead and Romeo — banished !'  
 That *banished*, that *one word banished*,  
 Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. *Tybalt's death*  
*Was woe enough*, if it had ended there :

But with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,  
*Romeo is banished*, — to *speaking that word*  
*Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,*  
*All slain, all dead* : 'Romeo is banished !'  
 There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,  
 In that *word's death* : *no words can that woe sound.*"

Act III. Sc. 2.

Romeo is almost equally emphatic, saying : —

"O friar, the *damned use that word in hell* ;  
*Howlings attend it* : How hast thou the heart,  
 Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,  
 A sin-absolver and my friend profest,  
 To *mangle me with that word banishment.*"

Act III. Sc. 3.

Romeo, however, imputes to his own name a force almost equally deadly over Juliet. He inquires of her condition of the Nurse, who replies, —

"O she weeps and weeps,  
 And now falls on her bed and then starts up  
 And *Tybalt cries* ; and then *on Romeo calls*,  
 And then down falls again.  
*Rom.* As if that name  
*Shot from the deadly level of a gun*  
*Did murder her.*"

Another example of the influence of sound as an "immaterial virtue" is given in the parting dialogue of Romeo and Juliet respecting the singing of the lark and of the nightingale. Juliet, at last convinced that it is the lark that she hears, exclaims : —

"It is, it is ! hie hence, be gone, away !  
 It is the *lark that sings so out of tune*,  
*Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.*  
 Some say, the lark makes *sweet division* ;  
 This doth not so, for *she divideth us*.  
 Some say the lark and loathed toad chang'd eyes ;  
 O now I would they had *chang'd voices too* !  
 Since *arm from arm that voice doth us affray*,  
 Hunting thee hence *with hunts-up to the day.*"

Act III. Sc. 5.

The scene of Peter with the Musicians (Act IV. Sc. 5) is another case directly in point of the power of sound over the feelings. Peter requests the musicians to play some "merry dump" to *comfort* him.

"*Peter.* Musicians, oh, musicians, '*Heart's ease, heart's ease.*' Oh, *an you will have me live, play heart's ease.*

1 *Mus.* Why *heart's ease*?

*Pet.* Oh, musicians, because my heart itself plays — *my heart is full*: Oh, play me some *merry dump* to *comfort* me. . . . Answer me like men.

When griping grief the heart doth wound

And doleful dumps the mind oppress,

Then music with her silver-sound;

Why *silver-sound*? Why music with her *silver-sound*? What say you, Simon Catling?

1 *Mus.* Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

*Pet.* Pratest. What say you, Hugh Rebeck?

2 *Mus.* I say — silver-sound, because musicians sound for silver.

*Pet.* Pratest too. What say you, James Soundpost?

3 *Mus.* Faith, I know not what to say.

*Pet.* Oh, I cry you mercy! you are the singer: I will say for you. It is — music with her silver sound, because such fellows as you have seldom gold for sounding.

Then *music* with her *silver sound*

With *speedy help* doth *lend redress*."

It is evident that this scene is expressly introduced in order to give a humorous version of the power of sound to affect the mind.

The foregoing examples are probably sufficient to show that illustrations of *sound* as an "immaterial virtue" are systematically introduced into the play. The same is true of *sight*, of which some instances may be given.

At the very opening of the play, this key is struck. The Capulet servant says to his companion, —

"I strike quickly *being moved*.

*Greg.* But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

*Sams.* A dog of the house of Montague moves me," etc.

In the garden-scene, from which there have been adduced examples of the potency of *sounds*, there are also examples of *sight* and its power to awaken the imagination, as in the following: —

"She speaks: —

O, speak again, *bright angel*! for thou art

As *glorious* to this night, *being o'er my head*

As is a wingèd messenger of heaven

Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes



*Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,  
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds  
And sails upon the bosom of the air."*

The most striking example of the effects of looks and aspects upon the mind is that of the mutual glances of Romeo and Juliet, with which their intoxication of passion commences.

The Nurse gives a description of a sight that produces a powerful effect.

*"I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes  
God save the mark ! here on his manly breast.  
A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse ;  
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaub'd in blood  
All in gore blood : I swounded at the sight."*

The most important instances, however, of the operation of both sight and sound upon the mind are offered by those incidents of the play which occasion misconstructions and mistakes that are fruitful of the most tragic results.

Act I. Sc. 2 is given up almost entirely to a dialogue of which the effect of sights and of beauty upon the eye and feelings are the theme.

The Shakespeare plays, though they are so constructed that they each may be taken to illustrate some one province or branch of Science or Philosophy, do not confine themselves to one view of it, but generally touch on several branches of knowledge, all however affined with the main subject. The foregoing citations make it apparent that there are characters and passages in this play which can be used if need be, to exemplify the Arts of Divination and Fascination, as laid down by Bacon ; Romeo very clearly representing in the forebodings and presentiments of his character Natural Divination ; and the Friar by his counsels (which are predictions of certain consequences that will follow meditated action) giving instances of Artificial Divination or "prediction by argument concluding upon signs and tokens," while both Romeo and Juliet are in their mutual bewitchment of looks and glances an example of Fascination. And to these are added also many illustrations of the influence over the feelings of *sights* and *sounds*, i. e. of looks and words, all which fall under the head of "immaterial virtues" as classified by Bacon.

But words, as sounds that move the feelings, are connected with the rhetorical side of the piece, of which the characters,

being strongly affected by imagination and passion, naturally speak the language of poetry. Passion begets poetry, and love makes all men idealists. The propensity on the part of lovers to seek figurative and musical expression seems to be alluded to in the following lines:—

“ Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy  
Be heap'd like mine, and that thy skill be more  
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath  
This neighbour air ; and let rich music's tongue  
Unfold the imagin'd happiness; that both  
Receive in either, by this dear encounter.”

Act II. Sc. 6.

Viewed with respect to its composition, this play has many passages that suggest coincidences between them and Bacon's remarks on “ Poesy ” and “ the Arts of Speech.”

“ Poesy,” according to Bacon, “ is taken in two senses ; in respect of *words* or *matter*. In the first sense, it is but a *character of speech* ; for verse is only a *kind of style*, and a *certain form of elocution*.”

In the latter sense, poetry “ is nothing else but an imitation of *history at pleasure*,” of which the epic narrative is the noblest instance, but of which, also, ordinary examples abound in tales, like that of Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet*, which furnished the fable of this tragedy.

As for the different styles of poetry, such as “ the Satire, Elegy, Epigram, Ode, and the like,” Bacon refers them to *philosophy*, and the *Arts of Speech*.

These “ arts ” fall under the head of The Transmission of Knowledge, which is divided by Bacon into the Organ (Grammar), the Method, and the Ornament of Speech.

To Grammar are referred “ all accidents of words of what kind soever, such as *sounds*, *measure*, *accent*.”

Of measure, Bacon thus speaks :—

“ The measures of words has produced a vast body of Art, namely, Poesy, considered with reference, not to the matter of it, but to the *style and forms of words*, that is to say, *metre or verse*, wherein the Art we have is a very small thing, but the examples are large and innumerable. Neither should that art which the ancients called Prosody be confined to the teaching of the kinds and measures of verse. Precepts should be added as to the *kinds*

*of verse which best suit each matter or subject."* De Aug. Book VI. ch. i.

This last remark points to the styles best adapted to different subjects, which, according to the emotions and associations they awaken, demand a certain mode of elocution, — as is seen in the ode, elegy, ballad, and the like, of which custom has fixed the measures and the forms. Of such differences of style, there are numerous examples in the play, for, though different measures can be introduced but slightly into dramatic dialogue, yet the spirit and sentiment that inspire the use of different measures can be so far infused into dramatic verse as to make it distinctly imitative of a special style.

For instance, the description of Queen Mab and her equipage is a *poem of the fancy*.

"Oh, then I see Queen Mab hath been with you.  
She is the Fairies' midwife, and she comes  
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone  
On the forefinger of an alderman,  
Drawn with a team of little atomies  
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep :  
Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs ;  
Her cover of the wings of grasshoppers ;  
Her traces of the smallest spider's web ;  
The collars, of the moonbeam's wat'ry beam ;  
The whip, of cricket's bone ; the lash, of film ;  
Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat," etc.

Act I. Sc. 4.

This collection of similes put together arbitrarily for the mere amusement of the mind, without any particular bond of union, should be compared with Juliet's soliloquy (Act IV. Sc. 3), which is a *poem of the imagination*, in which a throng of images are fused into one total impression by the influence of an overpowering emotion.

Act I. Sc. 3. Nurse's description of Juliet's childhood is dramatic *narrative in character*. But to distinguish it from the ordinary dramatic verse of the play, the mannerisms of the Nurse are heightened, and this gives to the character so strong an individuality that some critics insist that the picture is copied from life.

Act I. Sc. 1.

"Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun  
Peer'd through the golden window of the East,



A troubled mind drove me to walk abroad ;  
Where, underneath the grove of sycamore," etc.

This passage is a specimen of that kind of style which raises a prosaic and common subject by the use of poetical diction and imagery. In Montague's reply, we have the lines, —

"But all so soon as the all-cheering sun  
Should in the furthest East begin to draw  
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,  
Away from light steals home my heavy son," etc., —

which are mere verbiage, and probably intended as such, for "at day-break." The passage should be contrasted with the Friar's last speech (Act V. Sc. 3), which recounts concisely and without the least ornament the most important events of the play.

Act I. Sc. 5. The dialogue between Romeo and Juliet at their first meeting takes the form of a *sonnet*. The springing into life of a powerful desire and its importunity for immediate gratification are veiled and even exalted and refined by the gracefulness and courtesy with which Romeo solicits the favor of a kiss. It takes — together with Juliet's reply — the form of a sonnet, and is expressed in alternate rhymes, after the fashion of the sonnets of Shakespeare's age.

Act III. Sc. 2. Juliet's invocation to Night has been very conclusively shown by Halpin in the Shakespeare Society Papers (Vol. II.) to be *epithalamic* or a nuptial song, which was a distinct style of poetry, with peculiar modes of thought and allusions. This kind of writing is fully exemplified in Ben Jonson's *Hy-menæi*.

Act III. Sc. 5. The dialogue between Romeo and Juliet at parting. This is an imitation of a kind of *dialogue poem* "which took its rise," says Gervinus, "at the time of the Minnesingers — the *dawn-song*. The uniform purport of these songs is that two lovers, who visit each other by night for secret conference, appoint a watcher, who wakes them at dawn of day, when, unwilling to separate, they dispute between themselves or with the watchman, whether the light proceeds from sun or moon, the waking song from the nightingale or the lark: in harmony with this is the purport of this dialogue, which indeed far surpasses every other dawn-song in poetic charm and merit."

Act I. Sc. 3. Lady Capulet's description of Paris under the figure of a book is an *allegory*.

"Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,  
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen ;  
Examine every several lineament,  
And see how one another lends content ;  
And what obscur'd in this fair volume lies  
Find written in the margin of his eyes," etc.

Act II. Sc. 3. Friar Laurence's soliloquy is *didactic*.

"The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb ;  
What is her burying grave that is her womb :  
And from her womb children of divers kind  
We sucking on her natural bosom find ;  
Many for many virtues excellent,  
None but for some, and yet all different," etc.

Act III. Sc. 5. Capulet's description of Juliet is a short *parable*.

"How now ? a conduit, girl ? what, still in tears ?  
Evermore showering ? In one little body  
Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind ;  
For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,  
Do ebb and flow with tears ; the bark thy body is,  
Sailing in this salt flood ; the winds, thy sighs ;  
Which, raging with thy tears, and they with them,  
Without a sudden calm, will overset  
Thy tempest-tossèd body."

Act IV. Sc. 5. Lamentations of Capulet family over Juliet, apparently dead, are an *elegiac ode*.

"*Lady Cap.* Accurs'd, unhappy, wretched, hateful day !  
Most miserable hour that e'er time saw  
In lasting labour of his pilgrimage !  
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,  
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,  
And cruel death hath catch'd it from my sight.  
*Nurse.* O woe ! oh, woeful, woeful, woeful day !  
Most lamentable day ! most woeful day !  
That ever, ever I did yet behold.  
Oh day ! oh day ! oh day ! oh woeful day !  
Never was seen so black a day as this.  
Oh woeful day ! oh woeful day !  
*Paris.* Beguil'd, divorc'd, wronged, spited, slain !  
Most detestable death, by thee beguil'd,  
By cruel, cruel thee quite overthrown !

O love ! O life ! not life, but love in death !

*Cap.* Despis'd, distressed, hated, martyr'd, killed !

Uncomfortable time ! why cam'st thou now

To murder, murder our solemnity ?

O child ! O child ! my soul, and not my child !

Dead art thou ! Alack ! my child is dead ;

And with my child my joys are buried."

These lines are obviously *elegiac*, and in their abruptness and lyrical repetitions imitate *the ode*. In accordance with the "form" of the piece, the whole burden is thrown on the *day*, the *hour*, the *time*. It will be noted also that each of these different laments is moulded on the same form of words and that there is but little difference in their sentiments. In the strain of Capulet there is some trace of feeling ; in Lady Capulet's less ; Paris mourns only for his own disappointment ; and the Nurse, who probably is as much or more grieved than any, cannot, for vacuity of thought, do more than repeat the same words over and over again.

These formal lamentations are very artfully conceived, for Juliet is not dead, as the spectator knows, and had the wailings over her body been passionate and real, the effect would have been either ludicrous or repulsive.

Act V. Sc. 1. The description of the Apothecary and his shop has always been admired as a fine example of word-painting, or purely descriptive poetry.

Act V. Sc. 3. The lines which Paris recites at Juliet's tomb are a *dirge*.

Both the hero and the heroine are endowed with the poetical faculty and temperament. Their speech is lyrical, with a tendency to exaggeration that just verges on hyperbole, without quite dropping into it. For instance, Juliet says :—

"Is Romeo slaughtered and is Tybalt slain ?

My dear lov'd cousin and my dearer lord ?

Then let the trumpet sound *the general doom*,

*For who is living, if these two are gone ?*"

This manner proves the engrossment of the imagination with the objects that excite it and marks the emotional temperament of the speaker. Romeo is distinguished for this vein ; it gives a poetical note to the whole piece and causes the lyrical to predominate over the dramatic in the style.



The above imitations of various poetic styles, some of which call for a highly lyrical and impassioned strain, are not wanting in the true fire; they are genuine poetry, yet they in no wise conflict with the dramatic business of the piece, but serve both to develop character and advance the plot.

In like manner, and on a larger scale, the whole piece serves a double purpose: it portrays in its hero and heroine the effects of indulging imagination and passion unduly; it endows them with a temperament, through which they idealize not only the object of their passion but the passion itself; they "speak pearls and roses," like the heroine of the fairy tale, and win our interest for their characters and fortunes, and at the same time they are made vehicles of certain philosophical tenets, showing that the play follows a scientific method, and that its poetry (contrary to all theory) is not written through heat of imagination, but through the power of an intellect that looked through and dominated every subject both in matter and style, and simulated at will every phase of the human mind, rendering this dramatist the king of literature, the transcendent master of literary form.

Besides containing these imitations of poetic styles, the play displays an unusual variety of figures, there being scarce any ordinary trope or figure of speech known to rhetoricians — as the simile, apostrophe, personification, vision, climax, hyperbole, and others — that does not occur in it.

Under the head of "Grammar and the Arts of Speech" there are considered, besides measures of words and their sounds, also simple letters and their sounds, of which some examples are put into the play.

"Nurse. Doth not rosemary and Romeo both begin with a letter?

Rom. Ay, nurse, what of that? both with an R.

Nurse. Ah, mocker! *that's the dog's name*; R. is for the nonce: I know it begins with another letter."

So the Nurse says to Romeo, who has flung himself on the ground in despair: —

"Stand an you be a man:

For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand.

Why should you fall into so deep an O?"

The following, however, is a *locus classicus* with respect to the influence on the mind of words and letters, regarded as sounds: —

"*Jul.* What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus ?  
 This torture should be roar'd in dismal hell.  
 Hath Romeo slain himself ? Say thou but *I*  
 And that same vowel *I* shall poison more  
 Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice.  
*I* am not *I*, if there be such an *I*,  
 Or these eyes shut that make thee answer *I*.  
 If he be slain, say — *I* ; or if not, — no :  
 Brief sounds determine of my weal or woe."

As the influence of sounds upon the mind — exemplified chiefly by words — enters intrinsically into the plan of the piece, — sounds being held as analogous to sights and the rays of things and these last in turn to the radiations and influences of the stars on the tempers of men, — there is kept up throughout the play a jingle of words, not only by conceits and puns, but also by the introduction of *jeux de mots*, echoes and repetitions of sounds, some of them occurring in the most serious and passionate passages, greatly to the ire of the sticklers for classic regularity, particularly Dr. Johnson, who, in speaking of the play, says, —

"The persons, however distressed, have a conceit left them in their misery, a miserable conceit."

In Romeo's outburst of despair (Act III. Sc. 3) at being exiled and obliged to leave behind him Verona and Juliet's beauties, and "the white wonder of her hand," on which he says "flies may seize," he ventures on one or two puns, as, —

"*Flies* may do this, when *I* from this must *fly* ;" —

and again, in the same speech, he asks the Friar : —

"Hast thou no poison mixt, no sharp-ground knife,  
 No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean ?"

These clenches may perhaps be psychologically justified as the efforts of a mind to escape its anguish in an unnatural levity, — somewhat on the same principle, perhaps, as that which Romeo adverts to when he says, —

"How oft when men are at the point of death  
 Have they been merry ?" —

yet it can hardly be denied that they check the sympathy of the reader or spectator. The poet seems to have been willing to sacrifice to some slight extent the strict dramatic propriety of his dialogue to the requirements of the philosophic side of the play ; they are in accordance with "the form" or law of the piece, which

demands that a forecast of coming events should be made from the world of eye and ear around us, a task exceedingly difficult to do effectively on account of the ambiguity of sights and sounds; and the poet, therefore, in painting this ambiguous world, particularly of sound, draws largely upon the double meaning attached to sounds when used as words. The play opens with a volley of puns, which both exhibits the ambiguity of sounds and furnishes comic matter for the piece. Of this style there are many passages, and, indeed, whole scenes. One feature of a Shakespearian play is that in the use of language it gives prominence to that property of it which puts it in direct relation to the organic idea, and this property in *Romeo and Juliet* being sound, it occasions constant examples of words which (aside from puns and quibbles) excite attention *as sounds*; as in the following lines:—

“My *concealed* lady to our *cancell’d* love.”

“These *times* of *woe* afford no *time* to *woo*.”

“We see the *ground* whereon these woes do lie,  
But the true *ground* of all these piteous woes,” etc.

“And let them *measure* us by what they will,  
We ’ll *measure* them a *measure* and be gone.”

“While we were interchanging thrusts and blows  
*Came more and more* and fought on *part* and *part*  
Till the prince *came*, who *parted* either *part*.”

“I, measuring his affections by mine own  
That *most* are busied when they are *most* alone,  
*Pursu’d* my business, not *pursuing* his,  
And *gladly* shunn’d *who gladly* fled from me.”

Such passages are perfectly plain and unequivocal; they are free from quibbles, yet call attention to the words *as sounds*.

For the same reason, no doubt, the Nurse’s sense of the advantage of a match with Juliet is thus expressed:—

“I tell you he that can lay hold of her  
Shall have *the chink*.”

But this extraordinary and inexhaustible artist goes a step further, and introduces at times in an apparently casual and inadvertent way echoes of sounds by ingeniously framing passages of considerable length so as to produce constant repetitions of words; as in the Friar’s rebuke of the Capulet family.



"Peace, ho ! for shame ! *Confusion's cure lives not*  
*In these confusions. Heaven and yourself*  
*Had part in this fair maid ; now heaven hath all :*  
*And all the better is it for the maid :*  
*Your part in her you could not keep from death,*  
*But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.*  
*The most you sought was her promotion ;*  
*For 't was your heaven she should be advanc'd :*  
*And weep you now, seeing she is advanc'd*  
*Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself ?*  
*Oh, in this love, you love your child so ill,*  
*That you run mad, seeing that she is well.*  
*She's not well married that lives married long ;*  
*But she's best married that dies married young," etc.*

Act IV. Sc. 5.

Another passage may be given as a proof that this style is not accidental.

"Hast thou slain Tybalt ? wilt thou *slay thyself* ?  
 And *slay* thy lady, that in thy *life* lives,  
 By doing damnèd hate upon *thyself* ?  
 Why rail'st thou on thy *birth*, the *heaven* and *earth*,  
 Since *birth* and *heaven* and *earth* all three do meet  
 In thee *at once*, which thou *at once* would'st lose ?  
*Fie, fie*, thou sham'st thy *shape*, thy *love*, thy *wit* ;  
 Which, like an *usurer*, abound'st in all  
 And *usest* none in that true *use* indeed  
 Which should bedeck thy *shape*, thy *love*, thy *wit*," etc.

Act III. Sc. 3.

See also Act IV. Sc. 1. Dialogue between Paris and Juliet ; and numerous short passages in which the same artifice is used.

One of the most ingenious examples of the ambiguity of sounds is Juliet's speech to her mother, of which the meaning depends upon the *inflection of the voice*, and is an avowal of hate or of love according as it is pronounced.

"Indeed I never shall be satisfied  
 With Romeo till I behold him — dead —  
 Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vex.  
 Madam, if you could find out but a man  
 To bear a poison, I would temper it ;  
 That Romeo should upon receipt thereof  
 Soon sleep in quiet. O how my heart abhors  
 To hear him nam'd — and cannot come to him —  
 To wreak the love I bore my cousin  
 Upon his body that hath slaughter'd him."

Act III. Sc. 5.

As an offset to the puns and quibbles of the play and the use of the same sounds for different things, tautological and synonymous phrases are introduced, in which many sounds are used to express the same thing; for instance, this of the Nurse:—

“There’s no truth,  
No faith, no honesty in man; all perjur’d,  
All, all forsworn, all naught, and all dissemblers.”

Here are seven different sounds for the expression of the same thought. She goes on:—

“These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.”

In the following, nine different names or sounds are given to the same object.

“Nurse. Mistress!—what, mistress!—*Juliet*,—fast, I warrant her;  
Why *lamb*! why *lady*! Fie, you *slug-a-bed*!  
Why, love, I say! *Madam*! *Sweet-heart*! why, *bride*!  
What not a word! . . .

How sound she is asleep!  
I must needs wake her: *Madam*! *madam*! *madam*!

. . . . .  
I must needs wake you: *Lady*! *lady*! *lady*!  
*Alas*! *alas*! *help*! *help*! my lady’s dead!” etc.

The above series of pet names is characteristic of the Nurse, and, like a stroke of color, paints her manner. Indeed, all the characters—Romeo, Juliet, Capulet, Mercutio, and the others—have a characteristic manner or style.

A great deal of this species of tautology is scattered through the piece; it is met with in the mouths of the characters without distinction, though it is chiefly used to portray the Nurse.

Tautology is greatly used in the form of lyric repetition, where the mind, surcharged with feeling, is unable to free itself or give sufficient emphasis to its utterance without a repetition of the word or phrase. It marks also impatience of mind, as is seen in old Capulet; also determination and tenacity of purpose; also excitement and nervousness when one is at a loss what to do; also vacuity of mind when one knows not what to say, and so stands repeating what one has already said: in all these cases it is used, and furnishes a rhetorical balance to the quibbles and conceits of the play.

The vocabulary and, generally, the composition of the play take shape and color from the “form,” which being that of a

horoscope or "figure of the heavenly houses," involves the conceptions of a *house*, *observation of the hour*, and *temper*.

Horoscope is Greek; and the etymon of its last syllable, *scope*, signifies *to look at*, *behold*, and metaphorically, *to look*, *to examine*, *think on*, *view*, *learn*, *take heed*, etc. The noun *skopos* means a mark to be shot at, and the Latin *scopus* an *aim* or *purpose*. All these meanings get into the play, the words referring to looking, examining, beholding, and sight being very numerous.

The mention of the hour, the day, the time, is also very frequent, and many metaphors are taken from a *house* and the parts of it.

The observation of the hour is equivalent to a survey of events at any or every hour for the purpose of calculating their influence on the future. This is Artificial Divination, and is performed by reasoning from causes to effects, to do which properly requires a *balance of mind* and *evenness of temper*, undisturbed by imagination or passion. The word *temper* is a synonym for the *mean*; it is the result of an *exchange* of their virtues by opposite qualities in such proportion that none predominates. Consequently, the two conceptions involved in the law of the piece, and æsthetically counterpoised throughout the play, are *balance* and *predominance*; the first embracing the notions of exchange and *equality*, and all phrases implying an *interchange of opposites* that *balance* or *check* each other, and produce a *mean* state, and the latter of said conceptions, namely, *predominance*, being affined with *extremity* and *excess*, the *too much* and *too little*, and including also the *alternation of opposites*, where each is predominant in turn; which last is conspicuous also in the characterization, as in old Capulet, in whose temper one extreme follows another.

As with *balance* of mind is associated *deliberation*, so with *excess* and *predominance* may be taken *haste*, *desperation*, etc.

The junction of opposites that do not temper each other — and the same is true of the alternation of opposites — produces strong contrasts, of which there are examples in incidents, characters, and dialogue. They come up in various forms, as, for instance, in simile, —

"So shews a snowy dove trooping among crows  
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shews;" —

also in antithesis, as in Romeo's description of his love, —



"O brawling love ! O loving hate !"

"Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health," etc. —

or in Juliet's attempt to utter her feelings that struggle between love and hate : —

"O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ry face !  
Beautiful tyrant ! fiend angelical !  
Despisèd substance of divinest show !  
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st !  
Was ever book containing such vile matter  
So fairly bound ?" etc.

Observe that Romeo's antitheses are prompted by an affected love, and are mere logical contradictions, whereas Juliet's are antitheses of true passion, and might possibly exist.

Details of the diction and metaphors need not be given ; only a few examples of phrases containing the notions of balance or predominance will be cited, and these because the special law of this piece, which requires that the opposite qualities in the nature of men should temper each other and produce a perfect rationality of thought and action, is also the general law or method of the Shakespearian drama in which the two opposites that are always involved in "the form" must so temper each other as to give a tone to the piece perfectly consonant with judgment and good taste.

The following are examples of *balance*, *equality*, or *exchange* :

"Tut, tut, you saw her fair, none else being by,  
*Herself pois'd with herself*, in either eye," etc.

"If *love be rough* with you, be *rough with love* :  
*Prick love* for pricking and you beat love down."

"Is she *not down so late* or *up so early* ?"

"I have been feasting with mine enemy,  
Where on a sudden one *has wounded me*  
That's *by me wounded*."

"My words would *bandy her to my sweet love*  
As *his to me*."

"Nurse. Fie, how my bones ache ! what a jaunt have I had !

Juliet. I would *thou hadst my bones and I thy news*."

"But that he tilts  
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast,  
Who, all as hot, turns *deadly point to point*,

And with a martial scorn, with *one hand beats*  
*Cold death aside*, and with the other sends  
*It back to Tybalt*, whose *dexterity*  
*Retorts it.*"

"My heart is set  
 On the fair daughter of rich Capulet :  
*As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,*" etc.

"She whom I love now  
 Doth *grace for grace* and *love for love* allow."

Of predominance, excess, haste, etc., the following are some examples: —

"It is a throne where honor may be crown'd  
*Sole monarch of the universal earth.*"

"She is *too wise, too fair* ; wisely *too fair*  
 To merit bliss, by making me despair," etc.

"*Too swift* arrives as tardy as *too slow.*"

"Beauty *too rich for use*, for earth *too dear,*" etc.

"But my true love is grown to *such excess*  
 I cannot sum up half *my sum* of wealth."

"The brightness of her cheek would shame the stars,  
*As daylight doth a lamp.*"

"And that the trunk may be discharg'd of breath  
*As violently as hasty powder fir'd*  
*Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.*"

These instances are taken at haphazard, and could be indefinitely multiplied.

It may be worth while to take a short passage, or part of a scene, and analyze its dialogue in order more clearly to appreciate the mastery with which this artist, while moving forward his action and painting both the passions and minds of his characters, still rigidly adheres to his "form," which requires the exhibition of the influence of sights and sounds over the mind as well as breaches of custom, or of "the observation of the hour."

Act V. Sc. 3. The Watch has given the alarm with respect to the death of Paris, Romeo, and Juliet.

*Enter PRINCE and ATTENDANTS.*

Prince. What misadventure is so early up  
 That calls our person from our morning's rest ?

[A breach of custom.]

*Enter CAPULET and LADY CAPULET.*

*Cap.* What should it be that they so *shriek aloud*?

*La. Cap.* The people in the street cry *Romeo*,  
*Some Juliet, and some Paris*; and all run  
With *open out-cry* toward our monument.

[Sounds that excite fear.]

*Prince.* What *fear* is this that *startles* in our ears?

[The Watch now calls his attention to a terrible sight.]

*Watch.* Sovereign, here lies the *County Paris slain*  
And *Romeo dead*; and *Juliet, dead before*,  
*Warm and new-kill'd.*

*Prince.* *Seek, search, and know* how this foul murder comes.

[The duty of "observation" in order to form "judgment."]

*Watch.* Here is a friar, and slaughter'd *Romeo's man*;  
With instruments upon them, fit to open  
These dead men's tombs.

*Cap.* O, heaven! O, wife! *look how our daughter bleeds!*  
*This dagger hath mista'en*, — for lo! *his house*  
*Is empty* on the back of *Montague*, —  
And is mis-sheathèd in my daughter's bosom.

[A dreadful sight, together with circumstances greatly out of time and place, and contrary to custom.]

*La. Cap.* O me! *this sight of death* is as a bell  
That warns my old age to a sepulchre.

[A sight illustrated by a sound that is predictive of a future event.]

*Enter MONTAGUE and others.*

*Prince.* Come, Montague, for thou art *early up*  
To see thy son and heir now *early down*.

[Untimely incidents expressed by a jingle of words that makes them more impressive.]

*Mon.* Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night;  
Grief of my son's exile hath stopp'd her breath:  
What further woe conspires against my age?

*Prince.* *Look and thou shalt see.*

*Mon.* Oh, thou *untaught!* what *manners* is in this  
To press before thy father to a grave?

[The pathos of this apostrophe is derived from the expression of a father's grief by a figure taken from *manners*, which them-



selves are derived from the "observation of the time or period of life."]

"*Prince.* Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,  
Till we can *clear these ambiguities*  
And know *their spring*, their *head*, their *true descent*,  
And then will I be general to your woes,  
And lead you even to death."

[The Prince advises an observation of the events of the hour in order to explain their ambiguities, and discover their causes, when he will be ready to take all necessary action. He shows his earnestness by his tautology.]

As "a form" permeates the whole of a play, it necessarily converts a piece into a dramatic imitation of that species of writing from which "the form" is taken; and this in this tragedy being a horoscope, or "figure of the heavens," the play will have features in its construction that will bear resemblance to such a writing. Such resemblance or analogy must be of quite a general kind, since it is traced between the relations and influences of events, together with the loves and hates of men on the one hand and the friendly and unfriendly positions and irradiations of the stars on the other. Moreover a play that is imitative in its plot of a horoscope must present both "the figure" and its fulfillment, otherwise it would be without action. Therefore the first act answers to "a figure," in which the characters with their hates and loves, their "oppositions" and "conjunctions," are like the malign and benevolent aspects of the planets in their respective "houses," placed in positions with each other that foretoken the catastrophe of the play. The enmity of Capulet and Montague, the menaces of the Prince against disturbers of the peace, the suit of Paris for Juliet's hand, the high temper of Capulet, the recklessness of Mercutio, the deadly hate and meditated revenge of Tybalt towards Romeo, the dishonesty of the Nurse and her attachment to Juliet, the mutual magnetism of Romeo and Juliet (on which last all the others shed a baleful influence), are collected and grouped in such fashion that it would be easy for an experienced man to form "a judgment" or prediction of the consequences that will follow. It may be further observed that the first act is cut off from the rest of the play by a chorus that is utterly unessential, that tells us nothing that we did not know or might not readily divine, and that seems interposed only to

separate the first act — the horoscope or “figure” — from the remainder of the piece, its fulfillment.

The piece has a strong astrological flavor, so to speak, derived from the frequent mention of the heavenly bodies and the metaphors drawn from them. The following figure is taken from Astrology itself : —

“For *Venus* smiles not in a house of tears.”

The last six lines of the play — for the finish of this artist reaches the minutest particulars — partakes strongly of this astrological tone.

“A glooming peace this morning with it brings,

[The aspect of the hour]

The sun for sorrow will not show his head,

[The sympathy of the heavenly bodies with human affairs, on which astrology is founded]

Go hence, — and have more talk of these sad things.

[Observation of the events of the hour, and counsel with respect to their causes and effects.]

Some must be pardon'd and some punished ;

[The never-sleeping justice, which, in proportion to the fault, awards as consequences pardon or punishment, while in the two succeeding lines there is announced, with a deep note of pity, that such penalty attends even the truest and sincerest love that heeds not the counsels of reason ;]

For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.”

## OTHELLO,

### THE MOOR OF VENICE.

THE groundwork of *Othello* is found in Cinthio's novel of "The Moorish Captain," of which no translation into English is known earlier than that of Parr in 1795. The poet, no doubt, took the story from the original Italian, but made in it marked alterations, which give it a new meaning and spirit, if not altogether a new form. He both added much and omitted much, and what he retained he transfigured. In the original novel, it is stated generally and briefly that the marriage of Desdemona to the Moor was not approved of by her family, and the incident is then dismissed without any special significance being attached to it, but in the play this circumstance is expanded into the elopement of Desdemona, a great beauty and the heiress of a Venetian Magnifico, with Othello, a foreign adventurer; the pursuit of the couple by Brabantio, the outraged father, in company with Roderigo, a disappointed suitor of the lady (both which characters are added by the dramatist); the father's charge against the Moor before the Venetian Senate of abducting his daughter and practicing upon her with drugs and witchcraft; the elaborate defense made by Othello, supported by Desdemona; the subsequent reconciliation of the father with the married pair, who at once take their departure for a foreign military station where the Moor holds the chief command, and whither they are followed by Roderigo, who, under the advice of his pretended friend, Iago, hopes by costly presents to win from the lady some recognition of his love. These details, with their adjuncts, filling the whole first act of the play, are the poet's own invention, and give to the story more the air of a novel than the original tale itself possesses, and at the same time impart to the resulting train of consequences and to the catastrophe a depth of meaning of which Cinthio's story shows no trace.

As a special branch of literature, novels are *fictitious histories of lives* — or, at least, of their more important passages — of which the "form" appears to be the delineation of character as



tested, developed, and modified by circumstances. Novels set forth in detail the adventures of their principal personages, and, when skillfully written, enable us to see the hidden or remote consequences of some action or of some bias of character which run their course by successive and probable steps to a full period or conclusion. Possessing neither the dignity of History nor the extravagance of Romance, they aim at painting men and manners as they actually are, and, although not excluding public events, they dwell more particularly on the details of private and domestic life. Love, envy, jealousy, rivalry, plans for success, plots to baffle or ruin others, — these are the stuff out of which novels, or “Histories of Lives,” are for the most part wrought, and these are obviously the subject of *Othello*, which portrays society on a broad scale, giving a most vivid picture of those intrigues and passions which form the undercurrents of human intercourse, and which, though generally hidden beneath the surface of conventional decorum, oftentimes break out in deeds of violence that attest the barbarism which lurks in the most civilized communities.

The scene of the piece — at least during the first act, which gives tone to the rest of the play — is laid in an old, opulent, and Christian city, where rank and classes have long been established and ancient families attained their greatest influence; where civility and courtesy are the rule of deportment, and form and ceremony give elegance to social intercourse; where arts and letters flourish and order is maintained by law and religion. These features are apparent in the habitual sentiments which disclose the education and ways of life of the characters. As for law, it may be noticed that the statutes against witchcraft, “the bloody book of law in its bitter letter,” which was one of the greatest blots on the civilization of the sixteenth century, are brought prominently into view; but, to pass by many minor allusions, the sway of law is emphatically marked by the introduction of the Venetian Senate, the outward and visible representative of the justice of the nation, while the religious opinions and beliefs of the characters are apparent in their repeated and familiar allusions to Christian doctrine and practice. Of these, a few may be cited, as, for instance, this of Iago, —

“Were it to renounce his baptism,  
All seals and symbols of redeemèd sin,” —

or this to the keys of Peter, —

“You, mistress,  
That hold the office opposite St. Peter  
And keep the gate of hell,” —

or this to a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, —

“I know a lady who would walk barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip,” —

or, again, this to Church discipline, —

“This hand of yours requires  
A sequester from liberty, fastings and prayer,  
Much castigation, exercise devout,” etc.

Othello, in his remorse, consigns himself to most orthodox gulfs of liquid fire, and Desdemona, in repelling Othello's accusations of unchastity, employs the same peculiar language which St. Paul makes use of in denouncing the same sin. Æmilia would “venture purgatory” to make her husband a monarch, and prays that he who has poisoned Othello's mind may be rewarded “with the serpent's curse,” while Iago in Scriptural language avows himself to be the devil or negative of truth, saying, “*I am not what I am.*” Angels and devils, heaven and hell are repeatedly mentioned, and the dread responsibilities of the future life as seen from the Christian point of view give a special, not to say an oppressive, horror to the catastrophe. The characters are not merely assumed to be members of a Christian and civilized community, but are designedly and strongly stamped as such. Christianity is blended with the life of the State, and is the basis and standard of its civilization.

The hero, then, of a novel or “fictitious life,” who is most entitled to admiration and honor, as coming nearest to perfection, is one who exhibits the greatest spirit of love and self-sacrifice, or one who most nearly approaches the Christian ideal.

It may be observed that a part of the action of the piece is a war between Venice and the infidel — or as the “Duke” styles him “the *general* enemy Ottoman” — from which word *general* it may be inferred that the Duke thinks of the Turk as Bacon did, when in his “Advertisement touching a Holy War,” he broached the argument that it was obligatory on every Christian nation, as such, to make war upon the Turk as infidel. This war is not found in Cinthio's novel, and as it ends almost as soon as it



is begun, by the destruction of the Turkish fleet in a storm, it is an addition made by the dramatist, apparently for the purpose and certainly with the effect of raising in the mind a contrast between *Christian* and *heathen* states, and causing us to associate the action of the piece with a Christian civilization. It is an instance of the subtile art with which this writer colors our thoughts, whilst apparently intent on some other purpose. It is a proof, moreover, that in dramatizing an old story this poet did not merely versify it, no matter with what power of poetry or of pathos, but worked artistically and according to a controlling idea; for he was one who saved himself all unnecessary labor, and whenever he found that the thoughts or inventions of others sorted with his purpose he adopted them without scruple or hesitation; but on the other hand, if invention of his own was necessary, it never failed him, and his alterations, modifications, and additions to the original fable are always made with an eye to some idea which he puts at the bottom of his play.

It may be worth while also to note a curious contrast between passages of the play and those points on which Bacon grounds his charge of barbarism against the Turks. These last are as follows: —

“A cruel tyranny, bathed in the blood of their emperors upon every succession; a heap of vassals and slaves; no nobles, no gentlemen, no freemen, no inheritance of land, no stirp of ancient families; a people that is without natural affection, and, as the Scripture saith, that regardeth not the desires of women: and without piety or care towards children; a nation without morality, without letters, arts or sciences: that can scarce measure an acre of land or an hour of the day: base and sluttish in buildings and diets and the like; and in a word, a very reproach to human society.”

In the Christian community represented in the play, instead of a tyranny “bathed in blood at every succession,” we find a Senate with an elective Duke or Doge; instead of a “heap of vassals, without nobles, gentlemen, or ancient families,” we have degree and rank and gentility especially marked; instead of being without “inheritance of land,” it is expressly mentioned, —

“Gratiano, keep the house  
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,  
For they succeed to you;” —



instead of a people "without natural affection or care of children," there is exemplified in Brabantio the utmost parental love and family care; instead of a nation "without morality," the people of the play all speak and act with reference to a moral standard, as for instance, —

"Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;  
The gravity and stillness of your youth  
The world hath noted, and your name is great  
In mouths of wisest censure;" —

instead of being "without letters or arts," direct allusions to them are made, as in Cassio's description of Desdemona, —

"A maid  
That paragons description and wild fame;  
One who excels the quirks of blazoning pens,  
And in the essential vesture of creation  
Doth tire the inginer" [the poet]; —

instead of an "inability to measure an hour of the day," measure of time by clocks is directly spoken of, —

"He will watch *the horologe a double set*," —

and instead of "sluttishness and baseness in diet," great state and ceremony are kept in their banquets, as witness the trumpets that summon the guests of Othello to supper, —

"Hark, how these instruments summon to supper,  
And the great messengers of Venice stay."

These little points mark the high finish the play-writer gives his piece as a picture of civil society; and they make evident, moreover, that he and Bacon had precisely the same notion with regard to the constituents of civilization.

States are civilized in proportion to their knowledge and observance of laws, physical and mental, of which the most important are those that regulate human conduct. These are derived from a knowledge of man's nature and relations, and among Christian peoples are allowed to find their best and highest expression in the precepts of their religion. A perfectly civilized society would be one of which each member were *self-governed*. This would argue an absolute supremacy of the reason, a perfect obedience of the will, an unfailing performance of duty, a cultivation of all the gentle and humane qualities; whereas, on the other hand, the ascendancy of the blood and passions is accom-

panied by vice, violence, cruelty, in one word, barbarism. Christianity and civilization, therefore, come to be equivalent terms. Respect for law differences the Christian gentleman from the savage, — a difference recognized by Othello, when repressing the affray between Montano and Cassio he exclaims: —

“For *Christian* shame, put by this *barbarous* brawl.”

Civility, therefore, taken in its largest sense, varies with man's knowledge and cultivation. On this point, Bacon in his Essay on “Nature in Man” thus expresses himself: “A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one and destroy the other,” a thought which Iago with a somewhat diffuse rhetoric expands as follows: —

“Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce, set hyssop or weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many, either have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills.”

And he adds: —

“If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to the most preposterous conclusions. But we have reason to cool our raging motions,” etc. Act I. Sc. 3.

In the play — in which European civilization, as it existed at the opening of the seventeenth century, may, perhaps, be considered to be on trial — these two opposite sides of man's nature, the rational and the sensual, which Centaur-like are blended together, half man, half beast, are distinctly put before us, and at times the animal side is presented so strongly as to be repulsive; for we have here to do with a dramatist, who, inimitable artist as he is, yet keeps his eye fixed quite as much, if not more, upon philosophic truth than on æsthetic effects, and who never flinches from painting in the strongest colors what his insight detects; and inasmuch as these plays may be regarded as a natural history, a compilation of moral facts and motives in distinct spheres of life, he sets down all that belongs to his subject; in this respect reminding us of what Bacon says of the introduction into his natural history of “things which (as Pliny says) must be introduced with an apology, — such things no less than the most splendid and costly must be admitted into natural history. . . . For *what*—



*ever deserves to exist deserves also to be known, for knowledge is the image of existence."* Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 120.

The unbalanced and one-sided nature of man, and the violent contrasts in him of good and evil, which render him "the glory, jest, and riddle of the world," almost preclude a perfectly correct knowledge of character. Virtue and vice are so blended, and so often wear each the mask of the other, that at times it is difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins. All our desires and affections being legitimate in their use, and licentious only in their abuse, they are Janus-faced, and become virtues and vices very much according to the direction in which they look. This is particularly the case with love, which is intimately allied with both sides of man's nature, and is a virtue or a vice according to the objects on which it is placed. When awakened by moral beauty, that is, by goodness (which even when found in an earthly object, is affined with the Highest Goodness), it is of a purity which refines and exalts the grosser elements derived from appetite, and frequently reaches to the sublimest heights of self-sacrifice; but when excited by physical and personal beauty alone, it is a mere impulse of the blood — selfish and sensual. This contrast is presented in the play with a strength that repels some readers. But by reason of the double nature of this passion, it is not practicable always to draw the line of division between the true and the false; it is, therefore, subject to the grossest misapprehension, and becomes an habitual theme of calumny.

But *Othello* being an ideal picture of life as it exists on its ordinary plane, it assumes that *perfection* which should be the aim of all men is hardly to be looked for in this world; and therefore the characters are drawn as imperfect beings, made up of good and ill together — beings who, however well-intentioned, are liable at any moment to have their better judgment overthrown by impulse and passion, and whose sayings and doings must in charity be judged with due reference to the peculiar circumstances of each case. This compounded nature of man is set before us in Iago's description of Cassio, which, coming from him, is of course defamatory, but will nevertheless serve for an example: —

"You see this fellow, that is gone before :  
He is a soldier, fit to stand by Cæsar  
And give direction. And *do but see his vice ;*



'T is to *his* virtue a just equinox,  
The one as long as the other."

In like manner, Desdemona, whose gentle spirit views all things with charity, endeavors to find excuses for Othello's unkindness in the general weakness of human nature.

"Nay, we must think  
*Men are not gods ;*  
Nor of them look for such observance,  
As fit the bridal," etc.

And in the same vein, Iago, affecting to excuse Cassio's violence towards Montano, says : —

*" But men are men, the best sometimes forget."*

And from other passages it would appear that notwithstanding *perfection is the rule*, it is not expected to be met with in practical life.

Owing to their want of balance, men are developed in special directions and in varying degrees ; some being more or less intellectually, others more or less morally, cultivated ; and indeed in active life there is frequently found a kind of relative perfection or a *sufficiency*, consisting of a high degree of excellence equal to a full discharge of some special office or vocation. For instance, Othello possesses a sufficiency of ability and fidelity for the complete performance of his duty as general of the Venetian army. So Iago's intellectual dexterity and Desdemona's moral goodness are all but perfect in their respective kinds, however much Iago may lack morality and Desdemona worldly knowledge. The perfect man, however, is fully developed both intellectually and morally, and is as strict a lover of truth as he is of virtue. In Christian lands, the type of perfection is the Christian ideal, which is one of wisdom as well as of goodness. This is the highest Good, or that Goodness which, as Bacon says, in his Essay on the subject, is "of all virtues and dignities of the mind the greatest, being the character of the Deity," and as existing in man, he defines it to be "the affecting the weal of men which answers to the theological virtue, Charity ;" and if men in their striving after perfection do not pursue this supreme Good which will bring them nearest to perfection, it is a clear proof of their blindness and of their selfish desires. For love or charity, which is "the law of perfection," and which is all one

with goodness, being "nothing else than goodness put in motion and applied" [*Val. Term.* ch. i.] represses the selfish passions while it strengthens every social virtue. It is, therefore, the great civilizer, softening the manners, prompting aid and service, and teaching patience and forgiveness of injuries. On this point Bacon is explicit. Treating in his chapter on Moral Knowledge of the remedies for the mind, and the best mode of reducing the desires and appetites to obedience, he states that the remedy "which is the most noble and effectual to the reducing the mind to virtue, and *placing it in a state nearest perfection*, is the electing and propounding into a man's self good and virtuous ends of his life and action, such as may be in *a reasonable sort within his compass to attain.*"

After citing some instances of eminent goodness among the heathen, he adds: —

"But these be heathen and profane passages, which grasp at shadows greater than the substance, but the true religion and Holy Christian faith lays hold of the reality itself by imprinting upon men's minds Charity, which is excellently called the *bond of perfection*, because it comprehends and fastens all virtues together. And it is elegantly said by Menander of human love (which is but a false imitation of divine love), 'That love is a better teacher of human life than a left-handed sophist,' whereby he means that comeliness of manner is better taught by love than by a clumsy preceptor or sophist, whom he calls left-handed; because with all his laborious precepts and rules he *cannot form a man so dexterously* nor with that facility to *prize and govern himself in all things*, as love can do. So certainly, if a *man's mind be truly inflamed with charity it raises him to a greater perfection* than all the doctrines of morality can do; which is but a sophist in comparison with the other. . . . All the other qualities which we admire in man, though *they advance nature*, are yet subject to excess, whereas Charity alone admits of no excess" . . . but "by *aspiring to similitude of God in goodness or love*, neither angel nor man ever transgressed or shall transgress, for unto that imitation we are called. 'Love your enemies, bless them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you,' etc. De Aug. Book VII. ch. iii.

Thus we perceive that with Bacon, Christian perfection is the model and exemplar of good; this, too, is the doctrine of *Othello*,



in which tragedy the Christian ideal is taken as the standard of character.

This character was incarnate once and was described by an old poet as —

“A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit ;  
The first true gentleman that ever breath'd,” —

the highest type, at once of Christianity and civilization.

The good and evil in men's natures and in their conduct, plans, and usages are subjects on which human judgment is constantly exercised ; and a concurrence of these judgments or of most of them constitutes Public Opinion, a force more potent over Society than either law or religion. It is, moreover, practically the measure of civilization, for however perfect in theory the laws of the State may be, its civilization is tested by its manners and customs. Public opinion makes and unmakes reputation and establishes the practical standard of human action ; but it necessarily partakes of the imperfections of the source whence it proceeds ; and being vastly more influenced by prejudice and passion than by careful deliberation or charity or love of truth, it often confers praise and blame, honor and dishonor most undeservedly. Particularly is it exposed to be biased by calumny and is ever too ready to believe the worst side of every case without examination. In all states, even the most highly civilized, there are barbarous usages, which, though condemned by law, are upheld by opinion. One such form of barbarism which finds favor to some extent and which is of frequent occurrence in all countries, even the most highly Christianized, is a bloody revenge for conjugal dishonor. This “wild justice,” especially where guilt has been made clear, has often been upheld and even applauded by Public Opinion. But there can be no greater disregard of the justice of the nation. Such opinion rests on a false sentiment of honor, the dread of shame, of ridicule, and the world's contempt. True honor is the meed of praise for service faithfully and ably performed, and as a principle of character is a devotion to duty. It is in fact, a name for truth and goodness, a conscious rectitude, which, fearing God and not man, dares do right without heeding the popular breath, and moves on secure in its own approval and its own magnanimity ; being moreover a reality, it exists independent of opinion, but the honor which Society cherishes and which demands that every insult shall be wiped out in blood is the offspring of pride



and self-love and lives by and through opinion alone. The standard, moreover, by which Public Opinion is formed, will rise no higher than the general conscience found among men, and although some few of higher cultivation will have attained a more elevated rule of action, yet even among these will be found so great a deference to Public Opinion, that they will in many cases violate their own consciences rather than incur the public disapprobation. These reflections though trite point to the very heart and centre of the play.

Iago, — *honest* Iago, as he is called by all who enjoy his acquaintance, for he is of Machiavelli's opinion, as quoted by Bacon when he treats of Evil Arts, "that virtue itself a man should not trouble himself to attain, but only *the appearance thereof to the world*, because the credit and reputation of virtue is a help, but the use of it an impediment," — *honest* Iago, who throughout the piece speaks the voice of Public Opinion, and reflects the sentiments of the generality, hits off this common conscience, and shows how easily provocation rises to the point where retaliation may be held justifiable.

"*Iago.* Though in the trade of war I have slain men,  
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience  
To do no contriv'd murder ; *I lack iniquity*  
*Sometimes to do me service : — nine or ten times*  
*I thought to have yerk'd him here under the ribs.*  
*Oth.* 'T is better as it is.

*Iago.* Nay, but he prated  
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms  
Against your honour  
That *with the little godliness I have*  
*I did full hard forbear him."*

That Society should allow the libertine to pass scot-free, and yet visit the injured husband with scorn and ridicule unless his "godliness" is so "little" as not to prevent his "yanking" his wronger under the ribs, is a conclusive proof how unchristian are its instincts, how barbarous its judgments, for, for the individual to seize the sword of justice and act as both judge and executioner is a regress to barbarism at a single stride, and proves how far modern civilization is removed from the spirit of that religion which is its foundation, and of which the chief virtues are charity and forgiveness of injuries.

Yet so long as pride is the predominant passion of Society, so

long will jealousy of successful rivals, whether in love or business, excite hatred and revenge. As man now is, envy and jealousy are inseparable from the structure of society, for all societies rest on degree, and degree fosters pride and desire of distinction. The world's esteem is the incentive to high deeds and virtuous lives, and Society professes to award its prizes of good name and fame according to merit, but a true judgment is almost impossible, so strong a bias do the affections give to opinion. This is the burthen of Iago's complaint against the public service of his time.

"'T is the curse of service.

Preferment goes by letter and affection,  
And not by old gradation, where each second  
Is heir to the first."

Honor creates envy, and envy detraction, so that every channel of human society is poisoned and blackened by defamation and slander. The unworthy, moreover, will be prompted to compass the rewards of virtue and good service by craft and intrigue, whilst other illusions that mislead the judgment arise from the duplicity of circumstances. To reach the true motives of men, and to pass correct judgment upon their conduct, constant reference must be had to the circumstances under which they act, but circumstances, being but accidents of the truth, lead to very uncertain conclusions, both because they can be but seldom fully known and because they offer in most cases a double interpretation and point either way, to good or to evil, as they chance to be looked at with eyes of charity or eyes of hatred. Thus Desdemona marries under circumstances that attract much attention. There exists a most striking disparity between herself and her husband in race, years, complexion, and country, — in short, in all external points. These circumstances are to some, who can read her true nature, a convincing proof that her love is so lofty and spiritualized that it overlooks all unessential differences between herself and Othello, and finds a full contentment in the nobleness of Othello's mind; but to others, suspicious and skeptical, these same circumstances are sufficient evidence that her love is but a gross and eccentric appetite that craves unnatural stimulus, whilst to her father, Brabantio, who leans to neither conclusion, they bring only a conviction that his daughter has been wrought upon by "medicines and witchcraft." Throughout



the play is the fallacy of circumstances as indices of the truth and their double aspect exposed, and just according to the gloss given to them is opinion swayed one way or the other. The only corrective for these errors is a patient inquiry into the facts, — a trouble that men but seldom incur, except in very important cases. Usually their judgments are formed off-hand, and at the first glance at the facts, as is most strongly exemplified in this tragedy.

*Othello*, then, is a picture of Society in which is developed the tragic element that lurks in a blind worship of the world's opinion, and in too rash and hasty a reliance upon circumstances as exponents of the truth. But the analysis of the subject does not stop with this surface-view of things. The subject is capable of a minuter subdivision, and of a more radical statement. The dramatist is not content unless he can exhibit the causes why Opinion so often and so greatly errs, and why Circumstance is so frequently misinterpreted and rendered deceptive. His plan involves the setting forth the means and modes by which these errors and deceptions are made effective. Opinion cannot act without speech. It is by the faculty of speech that men exercise a reciprocal influence on each other; and the artist, therefore, subjects to his analysis speech as the instrument and condition of all human society.

The possession of reason and the moral sense renders man human, and the gift of speech renders his humanity available. The tongue is the organ of sympathy: it links mind to mind and heart to heart, and with its syllables is built the whole fabric of human society. Speech should be the true exponent of the inward man; words should correspond with things, statements with facts, and so essential is truth to the safety of Society that veracity is necessarily and instinctively made the point of honor and the test of moral worth. But alas! the apothegm of the wit that language was given to man to conceal his thoughts is not more witty than it is practically true, — witty only because true, — and speech, powerful as it is in the cause of truth, love, praise, honor, sincerity, and virtue, is equally potent for hate, malice, slander, falsehood, and all the machinations of hell. On mere words frequently hang the issues of life and death. By speech the devil exercises his deadliest malignity over the soul of man; by it he converts trust to suspicion, love to hate, kindness to cruelty, fond-



ness to contempt, tenderness to murder ; and by it he changes, as if words were spells that possessed some infernal necromancy, the aspect of everything, and seems to bedim and blacken the purity of heaven itself. It is the agency of speech as the utterance of the soul and moral nature, by which character is revealed and the relations of individuals determined with regard to their motives, sentiments, and passions ; its correspondency with thoughts and things as constituting truth and its emptiness of these as constituting falsehood ; its power to gild and grace error, and its deceptive nature as an organ of opinion ; and, above all, its frightful influence as an instrument of calumny, which the poet has assumed as the basis on which to build his grand tragedy of *Othello*, representing Man in Society.

Wedded love, the foundation of the family, is the most sacred human tie ; it is, moreover, the heart and core of Society and the very sanctuary of honor. It is, therefore, the relation in which the motives and conduct of the parties are subject to the closest scrutiny and liable to the greatest misrepresentation. In *Othello* this primary and central principle, this bond of individual happiness and pledge of social welfare, is represented as the point at which the malevolence that dwells darkly in the bosom of Society aims, at every opportunity, its deadliest blows ; and if when exemplified in its noblest type and in its essential purity, it falls beneath them, it is but too sad a proof that Society itself is intrinsically corrupt and its education of the individual founded on a false principle of honor.

In this exegesis no full analysis will be attempted of the characters as dramatic creations. They will be touched upon only as embodiments of the philosophical principles which form the groundwork of the play. The endeavor will be only to trace the first outline sketch of the picture before it was filled in and colored with all the lights and shades of character.

Othello, the hero of the tragedy, is a Moor, a soldier of fortune, but a man of heroic and magnanimous nature ; a true lover of honor, open, trusting, and noble, and endowed with exceeding pride of character, even to the verge of vainglory. His life has been one of wild adventure, having been passed in battles, travels, and moving accidents by sea and land ; and such is his love of a free and homeless life that he tells us that he would not —

“His *unhoused free condition*  
Put into circumscription and confine  
For the sea’s worth.”

Naturally of high intelligence, yet being of barbaric race he partakes also of barbaric ignorance. Imaginative, credulous, in fact superstitious, he actually believes that the “Anthropophagi and the men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders” inhabit the strange countries he has visited, and that the magic handkerchief he gives to Desdemona possesses the talismanic virtues he ascribes to it. Having become a Christian, however, he takes service with the State of Venice as commander of their army. For this high dignity his skill and valor fully qualify him. He is remarkable for his devotion to duty, and is ready at the shortest notice to relinquish his pleasures and personal wishes to perform his duty to the State. He is equally exacting of duty from others. No motives of affection or of friendship can soften his stern justice. Although much attached to Cassio, his most intimate friend, whom he had made his lieutenant, and “who had shared dangers with him,” yet Cassio having been guilty of a breach of discipline, he at once makes him an example by dismissal and disgrace. The hardships he has endured and the dangers he has encountered have disciplined his temper to a high, not to say the very highest, degree of *self-government*. Of this he is conscious; he claims to possess “a *perfect soul*,” and this conviction renders him cool and dispassionate under the most trying circumstances. He can look on without visible emotion when in battle the cannon puffs his own brother from his arm. His reputation with the Venetian Senate is that of one whose “*nature passion cannot shake*,” and as an officer and a soldier he is considered “*all-in-all sufficient*.” But notwithstanding his dignity, his great heart, and his self-command, Othello is a child of the sun; “his blood is all meridian,” and beneath his calm and dignified bearing he conceals depths of passion that need but the requisite incentives to boil with savage fury. At such moments he relapses into the barbarian; the rolling of his eyes, the gnawing of his lip, and the shaking of his frame are tokens of ferocity but seldom seen among civilized men. He is then “fatal,” and capable of perpetrating any act, however inhuman and desperate. He thus combines in himself in two extremes self-command and lawless passion, the respective characteristics of



civilization and barbarism; and he is, therefore, an embodiment of the leading conceptions of the play, and a conspicuous example of the product of an imperfect civilization.

Having taken service with the State of Venice, Othello becomes the friend and frequent guest of Brabantio, a Venetian senator of the highest dignity, at whose house he meets with Desdemona, Brabantio's daughter, and having won her love clandestinely marries her. This fact becomes known to Roderigo, a weak young gentleman of great pride of wealth, who has pressed his suit unsuccessfully to Desdemona. At the instigation of Iago, his pretended friend, he calls up Brabantio at the dead of night and informs him of his daughter's flight:—

“Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,  
I say again, hath made a gross revolt;  
*Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes*  
*To an extravagant and wheeling stranger*  
*Of here and everywhere.”*

This mode of speaking of Othello, as a mere roaming and irresponsible adventurer, on the part of Roderigo, a Venetian gentleman, who, however weak in brain, would on that very account reflect all the more faithfully the sentiments of his class, throws some light (making all due allowance for his disposition to speak disparagingly of a rival) on the social estimation in which Othello is held among the higher classes of Venice.

Brabantio, whose main characteristic is his *pride of family and position*, is horrified at the information; and, overwhelmed with anguish at the thought of the shame his daughter had brought upon herself and family, hurries off at once, under the guidance of Roderigo, to reclaim her, if possible, from the Moor. It may be observed that such is Brabantio's sense of the ineligibility, not to say degradation, of the match, that he deems the silly Roderigo, whom he had previously forbidden his house, a preferable son-in-law to Othello. “Oh, would you had had her!” he exclaims to him, as, half frantic, he is about to pursue his daughter. Othello, however, is warned of Brabantio's approach by Iago, who tells him, moreover,—

“That the Magnifico is much below'd  
And hath, in his effect, a voice potential  
*As double as the duke's.* He will divorce you.”

In Othello's reply, much of his character is revealed. We see



the pride he takes in the honorable services he has rendered the State, and the consciousness of the high personal consideration he is entitled to. We see, also, his recognition of the anomalous position he holds among the Venetian aristocracy ; that, although of the highest military rank, yet as a stranger and a Moor, without family or connections that can give him standing or responsibility, his claims to equality would be repelled if pushed beyond his professional position or the limits of ordinary social intercourse ; and, consequently, that his match with Desdemona must necessarily be held in public estimation as a piece of greater good fortune than he could justly aspire to ; whilst, on the other hand, his intrinsic worth and manhood and the memory of his royal descent give him in his own eyes a full right to win and wear the daughter of the proudest Magnifico of the State.

“ Let him do his spite.

My services, which I have done the signiory,  
*Shall out-tongue his complaint.* 'Tis yet to know  
 (Which when I know that *boasting is an honour*  
*I shall promulgate*) I fetch my life and being  
 From men of royal siege, and *my demerits*  
*May speak unbonnetted* to as proud a fortune  
 As this that *I have reached.*”

This is, certainly, the highest personal pride ; yet the very fact that he claims, though without rank and “ unbonnetted,” to be entitled on the score of personal merit alone to marry as “ proud a fortune ” as the daughter of a Magnifico, implies a consciousness that the match will not be looked upon as an equal one by Society at large ; and his allusion to his royal descent plainly shows the further consciousness that as a foreigner of unknown origin, his want of lineage is a particular objection to an alliance with him on the part of a haughty aristocracy.

Brabantio, on coming up with Roderigo and officers, at once attempts to arrest the Moor on the ground that he had practiced upon his daughter with spells and witchcraft ; for the Magnifico, who sees the whole occurrence with eyes of family pride, cannot comprehend how his daughter could thus deceive him and bring, by her discreditable marriage, such disgrace upon her connections, unless she had been placed under the influence of drugs and charms. The Moor, though a high officer in the service of the State and professing Christianity, was, after all, in the eyes of

Brabantio but a mercenary adventurer, of infidel race, and more or less nearly connected — no matter for the degree — with a race of bondmen, in fact, but little better than a pagan and a blackamoor. In a State like Venice, the policy of which was to entrust the command of its armies to foreigners, a soldier, like Othello, of great military experience and ability, might be taken into its service, and such a man might be received into the family circle as a guest, who had seen much and had much to relate, but the thought was not to be tolerated that, however high his personal character or the office which he might temporarily hold, he should be permitted to mingle his ignoble strain with the bright blood of a Venetian senator. Brabantio keenly feels the disdain with which his fellow-nobles will look upon the alliance, and

“That what’s to come of *his despised time*  
Is nought but bitterness.”

He, therefore, thus vehemently and contemptuously addresses Othello ; —

“O thou *foul thief*, where hast thou stow’d my daughter ?  
*Damn’d as thou art*, thou hast enchanted her :  
For I’ll refer me to all things of sense,  
If *she in chains of magic were not bound*,  
Whether a maid so tender, fair and happy,  
So opposite to marriage that she shunn’d  
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,  
Would ever have, to incur the general mock,  
Run from her guardage, to the sooty bosom  
*Of such a thing as thou ; to fear, not to delight ?*”

And he appeals to public opinion, to the general estimation, with regard to the facts.

“*Judge me the world*, if ’t is not gross in sense  
That thou hast practis’d on her with foul charms,” etc.

After a short parley, however, Brabantio, learning that the Duke and Senators are in council, and certain that “his brothers of the State cannot but feel this wrong as ’twere their own,” hastens away to lay his grievance before them.

“For if such actions may have passage free  
*Bond slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be*,” —

inasmuch as it would be putting, at least in the opinion of Brabantio, a black adventurer, like Othello, on a par with the rulers of the State.

But Brabantio arrives at a time most unseasonable for his purpose. The Senate is greatly agitated with the news of the meditated descent of the Ottomites upon Cyprus, and their sole dependence to repel the attack is upon the warlike ability of the Moor. Iago anticipated that this would relieve Othello from any severe censure for his abduction and marriage of Desdemona.

“For I do know, the State,  
*However this may gall him with some check,*  
*Cannot safely cast him : for he’s embark’d*  
 With such loud reason to the Cyprus war  
 (Which even now stands in act) *that for their souls*  
*Another of his fathom they have none*  
*To lead their business.”*

This anticipation is fully realized. Any predisposition to take part with Brabantio as one of their class — and such a feeling is, at first, strongly manifested — is checked at once by reasons of State, and his charge falls upon cold ears. On the other hand, Othello’s truthful and straightforward answer to the charge not only disposes of it, but wins the sympathies of the Senators. His speech is but a reflection of his clear and candid soul.

“*Oth.* Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,  
 My very noble and approved good masters :  
 That I have ta’en away this old man’s daughter,  
 It is most true : true, I have married her ;  
 The very head and front of my offending  
 Hath this extent, no more. *Rude am I in speech*  
*And little bless’d with the soft phrase of peace ;*  
 . . . . .  
*And little of this great world can I speak*  
*More than pertains to feats of broils and battles ;*  
*And therefore little shall I grace my cause*  
*In speaking for myself : yet by your gracious patience,*  
*I will a round unvarnish’d tale deliver*  
*Of my whole course of love,”* etc.

Then follows his celebrated address to the Senate, in which he relates how — by a circumstantial story of his life, of the dangers and disasters he had met with, and of the wonders he had seen — he had unintentionally enlisted the interest and awakened the pity of Desdemona, and that his own feelings, also, had unawares been caught by the interest he had excited ; and he sums up the narrative in the following lines, which reduce the whole history to something like epigrammatic brevity : —



"She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd ;  
And I lov'd her that she did pity them."

Thus we see that Othello wins Desdemona's love *by and through Speech*, — not speech used in flattery or in admiration of her beauty and accomplishments, nor even in professing his own love and soliciting hers in return, but by speech as the utterance of the inward man, revealing *incidentally* and *unconsciously*, in a narrative of his life, a valor and nobleness of soul that fascinate a gentle and impressible girl, and unseal within her heart all the sources of her sympathy. This fact, made so manifest by Othello's defense, should be a full answer to all those critics who, siding with Iago, either openly assert or slyly insinuate that Desdemona's preference for a black man was founded in gross taste or in a secret physiological love of contrast. That this love on her part is natural is attested by the Duke, who expresses his interest in the affair, though, be it observed, not without a dash of class feeling in his advice to Brabantio to make the best of a bad matter.

"I think *this tale would win my daughter too*.  
Good Brabantio,  
Take up this *mangled matter* at the best," etc.

Brabantio, however, appeals to his daughter. He cannot believe that she will manifest such "treason of the blood" as to disavow his authority. But Desdemona corroborates Othello's story; whereupon her father, with a good grace but a broken heart, yields up his "jewel" to the Moor. The Duke, who seems to have taken quite a liking to the lovers, desires Brabantio to let time "*speak like himself*," and attempts to console him with certain paradoxical phrases, proving that the greatest grief is, after all, the greatest comfort, etc. (in fact admitting that Brabantio has very good ground, in general estimation, for sorrow at his daughter's match), but the bereaved father readily shows that these are but empty and equivocal words, which have no relation to any inward reality.

"These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,  
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.  
But *words are words*. I never yet did hear  
That the bruis'd heart was pierced thro' the ear."

The marriage of Othello and Desdemona is a perfect type of

wedded love. It is emphatically "the marriage of true minds," the love of soul for soul. It is the perfect reciprocity and sympathy of valor, honor, and manhood with gentleness, purity, and womanhood. Each finds for itself a complement in the other, and both combine in a union of spirit, sentiment, and mutual truth and trust, which bring as much of happiness and of Heaven as is ever vouchsafed to mortals on earth. Such a union is the object of the strongest human desires and the supreme form of the highest earthly good.

Desdemona reveals to us the essential and unassailable purity of woman's love, — a love deep, fervent, single, unalterable. Modest and shrinking, —

"Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion  
Blush'd at herself," —

she had dwelt alone in the depths of her own heart. Her suitors, the curled darlings of her nation, with "their soft *parts of conversation*" and their refined but effeminate manners, had never been able to engage her mind or draw her from her reserve; but the heroic qualities of the blunt soldier, Othello, at once awaken all the admiration and enthusiasm of her woman's soul. Her love is so purely a sentiment, so refinedly spiritual, so exclusively moving from moral causes, that it disregards all disproportionate and untoward circumstances, — circumstances merely external indeed, but which would have turned away from Othello the love of any maiden who had drawn her affection from a source less high and pure than an enthusiastic admiration of his chivalric character and the courtesy of his soul. For Othello is advanced in life, is of grave and serious thoughts and manners, is of foreign race and country, and, more than all, is black in complexion and all but repulsive in appearance; and to give additional effect to this outward disparity — for it is the point in the play on which the plot chiefly hinges — the poet, if he has not departed boldly from historical accuracy and made the Moor an out-and-out negro, has, at least, suggested it to the imagination by drawing him with strong African features, and by dropping, here and there, expressions respecting his personal appearance, which greatly enhance the contrast between the "thick-lipped" "black Othello" and "the divine Desdemona;" between his "sooty" complexion and

"That *whiter* skin of hers than *snow*,  
And *smooth* as monumental alabaster."



It is this extreme disparity that so bewilders Brabantio that he cannot conceive, gazing as he does through the intensest social and family pride, how his daughter — the daughter of a Magnifico — could, of her own volition, have lowered herself by the choice of such a husband, and thereby incurred “the general mock” and ridicule of Society. The deep truth uttered by the Duke to him, —

“If virtue no delighted beauty lack,  
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black,” —

this, Brabantio is utterly blind to ; yet the wider this external disparity between Desdemona and the Moor, the more pure and lofty does it prove her love, the more essentially true her union with him. And, in fact, this very incongruity is what justifies her course to Desdemona’s own soul. She is conscious that the step she has taken is a bold one ; that her marriage with the Moor can never, by reason of the circumstances of the case, take place with the assent of her father and family ; that in following Othello she is leaving behind her her home, her friends, and all her previous prospects forever ; yet she points to the fact that she had overridden the impediments that stood in her way, and had taken her fortunes by assault, as it were, as a conclusive proof that her love for Othello was so part and parcel of her happiness, was so seated in her soul, was so hallowed and true, that it triumphed, and had a right to triumph, over all considerations of filial duty and social usage.

“That I did love the Moor to live with him  
My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
May trumpet to the world : my heart’s subdu’d  
Even to the very quality of my lord ;  
I saw Othello’s visage in his mind ;  
And to his honours and his valiant parts  
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.”

Nor is Othello’s love for Desdemona but a little less lofty. His trust is boundless ; he desires “to be free and bounteous to her mind,” and although Desdemona’s sweetness and beauty have such an attraction for his sensuous nature that they seem almost to intoxicate him, he is the least in the world of a voluptuary.

This love, so sanctified by virtue and honor, so strong in conscious rectitude, so secure in mutual trust, and so imperative in its obligations that it braves a father’s wrath and public opinion and



seems to throw down the glove to any force or disposition in Society to cavil at it, disturb it, or assail it, originates, as we have seen, in *Speech*, or as Iago grossly perverts it, "*in bragging and telling fantastical lies*;" and the problem is whether the honor of the Moor, resting, as it does, upon a personal pride and the world's opinion, is so solid a virtue that

"The shot of accident nor dart of chance  
Can neither graze nor pierce it," —

and whether Desdemona's purity is so shielded by its own goodness or has so many "thousand liveried angels to lacquey it" that she may safely follow the inspirations of her love in spite of parental displeasure and the frowns of the world; or whether there is not in this honor resting on opinion a weakness and consequently in Desdemona's trust in it an imprudence which will furnish a point so assailable that the evil influences that infest Society shall in the end, and in the absence of all facts, be able by the use of mere empty speech — simulating the voice of opinion — to bring Othello, not only to distrust his wife, but through a sense of wounded honor absolutely to murder her. Every reader of Shakespeare knows how appallingly this problem is solved. Every reader must shudder when he reflects upon the power of Calumny, as illustrated in this play, and brings to mind the death and the agony worse than death that is pulled down upon these virtuous and lofty characters by the force of mere empty words when flowing from the poisoned tongue of slander.

With regard to Desdemona, who has been severely condemned by eminent critics for her elopement and her deception of her father, it must be allowed that her course was a great error, to say nothing of the imprudence of contracting a mixed marriage and of defying public opinion; but had she acted otherwise, it would have implied an experience and a knowledge of the world which she did not possess; aside, however, from the peculiar circumstances of her case, if we take the estimate of those who know her best, there can be no doubt of her surpassing excellence. Brabantio's deep paternal attachment, Cassio's respectful but enthusiastic devotion, Iago's reliance upon her goodness to effect his schemes, Æmilia's defense of her purity with her life, even Rodorigo's dim perception of her "blessed condition" and Othello's crowning testimony that if

“Heaven would make him such another world  
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite  
He 'd not have sold her for it,” —

all alike attest the profound impression the goodness of her nature makes upon others. Cassio says, “She is indeed *perfection*,” and although this, in this instance, is spoken of her superb personal beauty, yet if *charity* is “the bond of perfection” she is entitled truly to the praise on that ground, for her distinguishing traits are charity towards others, zeal in their service, and ready forgiveness of injuries; and indeed she possesses that kind of perfection which is the crown of human character and of which Bacon speaks in his Essay on Goodness, saying, that if a man “have St. Paul’s perfection, that he would wish to be an anathema from Christ for the salvation of his brethren, it shows much of a divine nature and a kind of conformity with Christ himself.” This spirit Desdemona evinces, when, dying under her husband’s hands, she devotes her last gasp to the utterance of a lie, thus becoming an *anathema* from Christ, in order to shield her murderer from the consequences of his cruelty to her. Æmilia asks, —

“Oh, who hath done this deed?  
*Des.* Nobody — *I myself*, farewell;  
*Commend me to my kind lord.* Oh, farewell.”

Here she touches the summit of human nature, and reminds us of the divine utterance, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” It is as near an approach to perfection as poor human frailty can make, and reveals a love that can only be expressed by the antithesis of a lie prompted by divine truth. It has been justly said that the ancient and classical ideal is masculine; it is one of strength, fortitude, unbending will and heroism; but that the Christian ideal is feminine, which though not wanting in passive courage, is made up of gentleness, meekness, patience, humility, faith, and love. And surely, if love, faith, service and an infinite spirit of forgiveness can constitute *practically* a Christian character, then Desdemona is a model of such a one; and if to these qualities be added gentleness — a peculiarly Christian virtue and her particular distinction — together with grace, refinement, and the accomplishments proper to her high social position, she may be looked upon as the all but perfect fruit of Christian civilization.

On the other hand, Iago is a moral monster, an embodiment of



all that is false and slanderous in Society. The mean pride and envy that hate superiority and take refuge in detraction and contempt of all excellence ; the false friendship, hiding rapacity and malice, the insincere profession, the sneer at virtue, the whispered innuendo, the insinuated falsehood, the perverted truth, the hint, the lie, the invention, in short all the arts of calumny, are to be found in every social circle, from the smallest hamlet where busybodies give zest to their gossip with ruined character to the elegant circles of metropolitan fashion, where the shaft of slander is pointed with wit or is winged from beneath smiles with which treachery and worldliness cover their malice. This spirit of defamation, this pride that tolerates no superiority, this envy and hatred of others merely for their virtue or their happiness, — in short, this *diabolism* of Society, scattered through many minds, appearing in one shape in one and in another shape in another, is concentrated and individualized in the character of Iago. In iniquity he rivals the devil so far as it is possible for human nature to attain such negative perfection. The main-spring of his action is envy, which, as Bacon says (Essay on Envy), “is the proper attribute of the devil,” who is called “the envious man that soweth tares among the wheat at night,” as it always cometh to pass that envy *worketh subtilly and in the dark and to the prejudice of good.*” This, evidently, is Iago’s method. His is that malignity which is set in action by any superiority in others, whether it be of condition, of rank, of moral character, happiness, or what not. The motives which he himself avows for his conduct are all common ones, such as slighted merit, wounded pride, revenge for wrongs received, jealousy, even lucre and the replenishment of his purse. True, the malice he displays is out of all proportion to any wrong supposed to be inflicted upon him, but such an inversion surely is neither unnatural nor improbable ; for who has not seen that slight and often unintentional injuries rankle deeply in a jealous bosom and excite the darkest malignity and hate ?

And after all, Iago may not be so much worse than many who are met with in the walks of actual life ; for the world is full of little Iagos, and all the qualities that go to make up the character are but too common in the world’s highways ; but he appears to be worse, — in the first place because we are allowed to look under his mask and see his real nature, which men of his cast in



actual life seldom permit us to do ; and, in the second place, because he is equipped with the weapons that render his malevolence effective. He is a most skillful sophist, a voluble rhetorician, and a consummate liar ; and to these accomplishments he adds a profound knowledge of the human heart and a dissimulation that is impenetrable. Notwithstanding his devilish purposes, he passes all the while for a man exceptionally kind-hearted and true, and is believed to be animated in all his actions by love and honesty.

With envy, his master motive, and guile, his potent instrument, Iago combines great pride of intellect and mastery of the minds of others. Without conscience and without sympathy, his intellect knows no law but its craving for intrigue and the indulgence of scorn. All his views of life, of men, things, and principles, are depreciatory. He despises honesty, but deems it politic to wear its garb. His gross and sensual mind degrades and pollutes everything that passes through it. Things most holy, breathed upon by his comment, become impure. With the keenest insight into those around him, he finds nowhere anything but objects of disparagement and contempt ; the weak and vicious he uses for his sport and profit ; the lofty and pure he sneers at, and hates while he sneers. He sees that the Moor is noble and trusting ; his aim, therefore, is to torture him with suspicions and make him "egregiously an ass ;" he sees that Desdemona is goodness itself ; his aim, therefore, is to turn her goodness into "pitch." Their happiness "he eyes askance, with jealous leer malign," as Satan eyed our first parents in Paradise, and he is determined to effect their ruin. "He will set down the pegs that make this music." The instrument he uses is calumny ; and his skill is shown in advancing his own interests at the same time that he destroys his victims, who all the while look to him for aid and advice as their dearest friend. In his genius for intrigue, in his malice, his guile, and the pursuit of his interests he may stand as a type of all the villains of all the novels ever written. And yet he seems the mouthpiece of indignant virtue. He can assume the tone of Christian charity and bind up the wounds (that he himself has inflicted in the dark) with expressions of brotherly love and sympathy ; and at other times can affect the boon companion with gayety and song as a mask for the most villainous treachery.

His wit is caustic and has no laugh in it. When Desdemona,

while awaiting the arrival of Othello at Cyprus, in order to beguile the time, asks him "how he would praise her," his slanderous words, though pointed at the sex generally, and though taken by her for "old fond paradoxes," gleam around her like premonitory flashes from that black cloud of calumny which in the end is to strike her to the earth. "*He speaks home*," says Cassio. "I am nothing," he says of himself, "if not critical," and it is almost the only truth that falls from his lips. It is the key of his character. His power lies in his consummate mastery of false words and sophisms. Under his gloss and interpretation the plainest facts change their aspect; the most trivial circumstances warrant the guiltiest conclusions, and the whitest innocence looks "grim as hell." Such in broad outline is the dramatic concrete that the dramatist has furnished us of that envious, defamatory, diabolical spirit his analysis discovers inherent in human society.

Iago is himself what he describes Cassio as being, "*a knave, very voluble, a finder of occasions*." And indeed, he reminds us of an observation of Bacon, who says: "If we diligently observe, we shall find *two different kinds of sufficiency* in performing actions and managing business. Some can make an apt use of occasions, but plot or invent nothing of themselves; others are wholly bent on their own plots, but cannot take advantage of accidental opportunities, either of which abilities without the other is very lame and imperfect." De Aug. Book VIII. ch. ii. Iago is an adept in each of these kinds of sufficiency, being quick to seize on every opportunity, and also exceeding fertile in inventing plots for the furtherance of his ends.

Iago scarce ever speaks that he does not illustrate the emptiness of words, either by the use of them or by pointing to the use of them in others. He lies to himself in soliloquy. In the first sentences he utters his pride and envy break out in sneers at Othello and Cassio — two of his antipathies — as being, both of them, dealers in verbiage. Othello's dignified bearing and self-respectful style he ridicules by describing him (in the interview with Iago's "mediators")

"As one, who loving his own pride and purposes  
Evades them *with a bombast circumstance*  
*Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war*," —

mere empty grandiloquence; and Cassio's accomplishments as a soldier he scoffs at as —

*"Bookish theorie*

*Wherein the tonguèd consuls can propose  
As masterly as he : mere prattle without practice,  
In all his soldiership."*

So, on the other hand, always malicious, always defamatory and quick to draw false inferences, he describes his wife Æmilia's silence as a piece of hypocrisy. Cassio has just received Desdemona, on her landing in Cyprus, with the most respectful gallantry, and turning to Æmilia, with freer manners, salutes her with a kiss, at the same time apologizing to Iago, who stands by, for the liberty he takes. That imperturbable gentleman only remarks : —

"Sir, would she give you so much of her lips

*As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,*

You 'd have enough.

*Des.* Alas ! *she has no speech.*

*Iago.* I' faith, too much.

I find it still when I have list to sleep.

Marry, before your ladyship I grant

*She puts her tongue a little in her heart*

*And chides with thinking."*

The full extent, however, of Iago's power over false words and constructions is not exhibited until he comes to tell and act the stupendous lie by which he breaks down Othello's trust in Desdemona's purity and love. To take the silly Roderigo in hand and twist him around his finger, to strip him of his money, to debauch and to demoralize him, and drive him on even to attempt an assassination, is to Iago but a pastime that in no degree taxes his powers ; but to transmute the high-souled Moor into his own likeness, to shake his noble, trusting nature with doubts of the wife he loved so deeply, to convert his faith in her purity into a belief that she was a "public commoner" of Venice, to madden him with a sense of wounded honor and love betrayed until he shall deem it his duty to take her life with his own hands as an atoning sacrifice to his sullied name and the world's opinion, is a task of far greater difficulty. But Iago, the consummate master of intrigue and calumny, has the requisite ability and training to overcome all difficulties. Nay more, out of Desdemona's goodness he will "make the net that shall enmesh them all." His skill will convert her most innocent words into self-defamation, and drive the Moor mad by means of the very qualities that should



win his love. Nor is the mere gratification of his pride in the wretchedness, the humiliation, and ultimate ruin of his victims a sufficient satisfaction for the exertion of his abilities; he must also advance his worldly interests. He, therefore, adds to his scheme the supplanting in office of Cassio, for whom he entertains a characteristic hatred, for that

“He hath a daily beauty in his life  
That makes *him* ugly.”

Iago clearly perceives that any abrupt charge against Desdemona would have no weight with Othello. He therefore begins, as Calumny always does, with small beginnings; he drops a hint. But even for this he prepares the ground with elaborate care. Knowing that the Moor is the soul of honor, who considers the essence of truthfulness to consist in an exact conformity of the speech with the internal thought, Iago begins, by way of induction as it were to his lie, with creating a belief in Othello that he has a thought or a certain something in his mind which he could communicate if he would, but which a friendly consideration for Othello forbids him from uttering. It is observable that Iago arouses Othello's suspicions, in the first instance, by throwing back upon him his own words, which seem to have become loaded with slander by the mere fact of having passed his lips. As well known as this scene is, it may be necessary for the clearer exposition of Iago's method in lying to quote a few lines.

“*Iago.* My noble lord —

*Oth.* What dost thou say, Iago?

*Iago.* Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,  
Know of your love?

*Oth.* He did from first to last; why dost thou ask?

*Iago.* But for the *satisfaction of my thought*;  
No farther harm.

*Oth.* *Why of thy thought, Iago?*

*Iago.* I did not think he had been acquainted with it.

*Oth.* O yes; and went between us very oft.

*Iago.* Indeed?

*Oth.* Indeed! ay, indeed. Discern'st thou aught in that?  
Is he not honest?

*Iago.* Honest, my lord?

*Oth.* Honest? ay, honest.

*Iago.* My lord, for aught I know.

*Oth.* What dost thou think?

*Iago.* Think, my lord?

*Oth.* Think, my lord ! By heaven, he echoes me  
 As if there were some monster in his thought  
 Too hideous to be shown. *Thou dost mean something :*  
 I heard thee say but now 'thou lik'st not that,'  
 When Cassio left my wife. *What didst not like ?*  
 And when I told thee he was of my counsel  
 In my whole course of wooing, thou cry'dst indeed ?  
 And didst contract and purse thy brow together  
 As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain  
 Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me  
 Show me thy thought.

*Iago.* Why, then, I think Cassio's an honest man.

*Oth.* Nay, yet there's more than this :  
 I pray thee speak to me as to thy thinkings,  
 As thou dost ruminate ; and give the worst of thoughts  
 The worst of words."

Othello's mind being thus prepared for the reception of the first germ of calumny, Iago lets fall, by way of friendly warning, his suspicion that there is an over-intimacy between Cassio and Desdemona.

"I speak not yet of proof.

Look to your wife ; observe her well with Cassio ;  
 Wear your eye thus ; not jealous nor secure.  
*I know our country disposition well ;*  
*In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks*  
*They dare not show their husbands ; their best conscience*  
*Is not to leave undone, but keep unknown.*  
*Oth.* Dost thou say so ?"

With Othello, a comparative stranger in Venice, these words coming from Iago, a Venetian, who in Othello's opinion is exceeding wise in this world's wisdom, have the greatest weight, and at once command his attention. Iago follows this up with a still stronger blow :—

"She did deceive her father marrying you ;  
 And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,  
 She lov'd them most."

This is like a flash of light into Othello's mind ; he knows that it is true, but does not perceive how sophistical is the inference Iago would draw from it, and the syllables which express his inward consciousness of its truth drop from his lips like weights of lead.

"And — so — she — did."

Iago immediately proceeds to apply by another bold and specious sophism,<sup>1</sup> the general truth he has enunciated with regard to the loose and hypocritical manners of his countrywomen, to the particular case of Desdemona, and having fairly lodged his slander in Othello's mind, he returns to rivet the point on which his whole success depends, that is, Othello's belief in his truthfulness.

"I hope you *will consider what is spoke*  
*Comes from my love* : but I see you are mov'd.  
 I am to pray you not to strain my speech  
*To grosser issue, nor to larger reach*  
*Than to suspicion.*  
*Oth.* I will not.  
*Iago.* Should you do so, my lord,  
*My speech would fall into such vile success*  
*As my thoughts aim not at."*

It is noteworthy that though no "practices of cunning hell" operated, as Brabantio supposed, to bring about the match between Othello and Desdemona, they are now in full exercise to destroy it. Othello's noble mind revolts at the poison with which Iago would contaminate it.

"I do not think but Desdemona's honest."

Still he cannot throw it off ; the mistrust that Iago has implanted comes back.

"And yet, how nature erring from itself,"—

a remark, that Iago, speaking the voice of a skeptical and censorious Society, seizes upon and expands, thereby echoing the thoughts and almost the words of old Brabantio in his bereavement,—

"Ay, *there's the point* ; as, to be bold with you,  
 Not to affect many propos'd matches  
 Of her own *clime, complexion, and degree*  
*Whereto we see in all things nature tends ;*  
 Foh ! one may smell in such a will most rank,  
*Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural,"* etc.

Now, for the first time, begins with Othello the torture of doubt. Brabantio's warnings could not shake his faith, Iago's first hints had been rejected as groundless, but now that this ques-

<sup>1</sup> Iago's favorite form of fallacy is what logicians call "an undistributed middle," or assuming that to be true of a whole class which is true only of a part.



tion of personal disadvantages and of the disproportionateness of the match between himself and Desdemona has been brought home to him, as interpreted by the voice of Society, and as arguing pretty conclusively the baseness instead of the purity of his wife, Othello staggers under the blow. From this time forth, though he has returns of fondness, the current of his thoughts sets steadily towards a conviction of Desdemona's utter worthlessness. This brings with it a storm of passion, which Iago, who is ever at Othello's side, watching the change that is coming over him under the influence of his poison, is obliged to summon all his coolness, skill, and courage to withstand. The Moor requires "the ocular proof," but Iago shows from the nature of the case — and in so doing kindles in the imagination of the Moor the grossest associations — that this is impossible.

"Where's satisfaction?

It is impossible, you should *see this*.

And yet, I say

If imputation and strong *circumstances*,  
Which *lead directly to the door of truth*,  
Will give you satisfaction, you may have it."

And, again, in his agony of mind, Othello demands a "*living reason*" that "his wife's disloyal." An ordinary liar, under such circumstances, would have invented or mentioned something as having taken place, under his observation, between Cassio and Desdemona, betokening a guilty intrigue between them; but Iago, the spirit of calumny, which creates everything out of nothing, disdains to effect his ends and work Othello up to madness with anything more solid or substantial than the emptiest of words and speeches. He, therefore, at once brings forward as a "living reason," *the mutterings of Cassio in a dream*.

"Sweet Desdemona,

Let us be wary, let us hide our loves," etc.

And so well does he succeed in making Othello outstrip his suggestions, and draw the worst and falsest of inferences from his cunningly devised story, that although he pointedly tells him that this "was but a dream," the Moor insists that it denoted a "foregone conclusion," and bursts out with savage rage, —

"I'll tear her all to pieces."

But Society would not be sufficiently avenged upon Desdemona for her imprudent disregard of circumstances, were not circumstances, most innocent and trifling in themselves, made to aid in affecting her ruin. Iago, the master of imposture and false appearance, is, of course, a proficient in the perversion of circumstances. The loss of the handkerchief and the use Iago makes of it, and the lies he tells about it and their effect upon Othello are too familiar to be dwelt upon. With amazing skill Iago not only turns Desdemona's advocacy of Cassio's suit against herself, but he even presses the vices of Cassio into his service and invests them with such a color in the eyes of Othello that they become proofs of the guilt of his wife. But his vilest lie is that of the confession of Cassio, who, as he alleges, like other knaves admitted to favors, "cannot choose but he must *blab*." Iago, however, does not venture upon so bold an assertion as this, until the "all-in-all sufficient" Moor, whose "nature passion could not shake," has been so racked with agony that he is as passive as a child in Iago's hands. This accumulation of seeming proof is too much for the balance of Othello's mind. Recollections of the handkerchief, his first gift to his wife, and by her bestowed, as he thinks, upon Cassio, Cassio's dream, and this last overwhelming confession of Cassio, all spun out of Iago's subtle brain, and made up of empty words without a shadow of fact to rest upon, press upon him simultaneously, so that in the conflux of thoughts — and of feelings conjoined with the thoughts — his mind can fix on no one notion distinctly, but is whirled in its eddy of passion, from one to the other, with so much rapidity that it can frame no one of them separately into language; and his expressions, consequently, become fragmentary phrases and unmeaning, incoherent words: —

"Handkerchief — confessions — handkerchief — to confess and be hanged for his labour, — First, to be hanged and then to confess, — I tremble at it, — Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction."

But amid this giddiness and bewilderment, he is conscious that he is uttering only a jargon of words that give no intelligible expression to the emotions that distract his soul; but ever honorable, ever truthful, ever mindful, even in moments of greatest distraction, of giving exact utterance to his thoughts and feelings, he throws in by way of explanation: "*It is not words that shake me*



*thus ;*” and then goes on : “ Pish — noses — ears — lips — is it possible — confess — handkerchief — oh, devil ! ” and he falls into a trance.

The progress of the change wrought in Othello’s mind is as marked as the different stages of a disease ; and Iago, who is in constant attendance, administers his “ medicines ” to destroy and not to cure. Had Othello’s honor, however, been the “ solid virtue ” invulnerable by chance or accident, which is attributed to him, and which he himself believes it to be, he would have been beyond Iago’s machinations. It has been made a question whether Othello kills his wife for jealousy and a spirit of revenge, or whether, rising above so ignoble a passion, he offers her life as a sacrifice to his wounded honor. It seems pretty clear that he fell alternately under the influence of both motives. His thirst of revenge was proportionate to the wrong done him, and this in turn is measured by the depth of his love and the intensity of his sentiment of honor. As this question seems to have a bearing upon the philosophical meaning of the play, it may be of interest to examine briefly the growth of passion in Othello’s mind.

When the possibility of Desdemona’s untruth is first presented to him, and his mind is as yet uncontaminated by Iago’s gloss of the circumstances of his marriage, he looks forward to a course of conduct consistent with the highest ideal of honor and manhood. He will first satisfy himself of the truth of the charge, and if she prove guilty he will repudiate her as unworthy of further thought. He says : —

“ No, Iago :

*I’ll see before I doubt ; when I doubt, prove ;  
And on the proof, there is no more but this ;  
Away at once with love or jealousy ! ”*

And again, after he has been stirred more deeply and his suspicions have grown stronger, he still can say, though with obvious passion : —

“ If I do prove her haggard,

*Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,  
I’d whistle her off and let her down the wind,  
To prey at fortune.”*

The tide of feeling is evidently rising, but there is as yet no vision of blood, no fury, no black thoughts of revenge. He is still the man of “ perfect soul.” Secure in his own high character, he can shake off any disgrace she can bring upon him without its soiling his honor.



But this is a strain of conduct too lofty for even Othello's strength of soul to maintain. His honor, though in the main of pure metal, is like his love and like all things human ; it has its alloy, its imperfections. Honor partakes of man's mixed nature and shows a true and a false side. In Othello it shines as devotion to duty, loyalty to truth, high aspiration to win name and fame by great service, but these noble qualities are mingled with a personal pride and a self-esteem which will brook no disgrace and which adopts that code, sanctioned by popular sentiment, which enjoins a bloody revenge for dishonor and gilds the act with the specious name of Duty. Here is the crack in Othello's "solid virtue," the flaw in his "perfect soul," which give entrance to the promptings of the passions. But for this imperfection Iago's suggestions would have fallen harmless. Yet this honor is so clever a counterfeit of true virtue that it disdains even life as the price of the loss of it. It is, however, but the creature of Opinion and is allied with all that is savage in man. Iago, therefore, by playing upon this sentiment through Othello's fears of a sullied name, and of the scorn of the world, goads him on to a loss of his self-government ; his slumbering passions start to life, and gaining strength as proofs accumulate, at last burst forth with volcanic energy. From the high-minded Christian gentleman and soldier, obedient to every law of the State and every summons of duty, he becomes the dupe of imagination and passion, and is converted for the time to a barbarian thirsting for blood. The transition is emphatically marked.

"Now do I see 't is true. Look here, Iago ;

All my *fond love* thus do I blow to Heaven :

'T is gone.

Arise, *black vengeance*, from the hollow hell !

Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne

To *tyrannous hate* ! Swell, bosom, with thy *fraught*,

For 't is of *aspicks'* tongues.

Iago. Pray, be content.

Oth. Oh, blood, blood, blood ! " <sup>1</sup>

This transition from the sway of reason to that of passion, from civility to barbarism, is more marked in Othello from his belonging to a barbaric race ; and this again makes him a better type, a more *conspicuous instance*, as Bacon calls it, of that savageness

<sup>1</sup> Othello, Act III. Sc. 3, Knight's *Shakspeare*.

of nature, which few men have ever received sufficient culture wholly to eradicate.

Othello's cry for vengeance clearly shows that jealousy has aroused all the latent ferocity of his African blood, but the paroxysm is too violent to be durable; and indeed it is a proof of Othello's nobility of nature, and of his freedom from low suspicions, that when he next reënters with Iago — who is even then busy fanning the fires of his passions — he has forgotten, or at least has overlooked the incident of the handkerchief, which had previously been the chief incentive of his wrath. It is not until Iago's direct mention of it that he recalls it, and says : —

“ By Heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.  
Thou saidst — oh, it comes o'er my memory,  
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,  
Boding to all — he had my handkerchief.”

Iago sees the necessity of adducing cumulative proofs, which he does with so much skill — converting every chance and circumstance into a plausible piece of evidence — that a fixed conviction of Desdemona's guilt is produced in Othello's mind. He is brought to believe that his wife is a wily wanton devil, versed in all manner of deceit and wickedness. This “strong conception that he does groan and choak withal” seems to justify his course to his own mind, for honor and duty seem to be enlisted in the cause of revenge, — a moral confusion that can only arise from that false sentiment inculcated by Society, which pronounces the murder of his wife a necessary vindication of his honor. Othello knows well the strength and impetuosity of his own nature; and on the night of the fracas on the court of guard, his words imply the great self-restraint he is obliged to impose on his feelings.

“ Now, by Heaven,  
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;  
And passion, having my best judgment collied,  
Assays to lead the way.”

The discipline of years, however, has rendered him strong against all ordinary impulses of his passions, and he has the utmost confidence in his own self-government. It is his boast to the Senate that neither pleasure nor passion can divert him from the performance of duty or impair his ability for business.

“ When light-wing'd toys  
Of feather'd Cupid foil with wanton dulness

*My speculative and active instruments,  
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,  
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,  
And all indign and base adversities  
Make head against my estimation."*

But at the time he utters this proud expression of self-reliance, he had had no experience of those lower depths of feeling which were soon to be revealed to him in his own soul. He—so sensitive to honor, so loyal to truth—knew nothing of the agony of believing worthless, vile, and polluted that which he had cherished and worshiped as pure, and which he loves with a love to which all other ends and objects had become subordinate,—which, being lost, the occupation of his life is gone. Jealousy, when springing from a betrayal of wedded love, and particularly when this love is excited by uncommon personal beauty and has any considerable element of animal appetite blended with it, is of a double nature, being a mixture of love and hate, and passionately seeks to kill what it as passionately loves, rather than endure its possession by another. It consequently draws after it a throng of varied and conflicting emotions, such as rage, scorn, admiration, abhorrence, loathing, pity, grief, tenderness, hate, revenge,—all which sweep in rapid succession through Othello's soul with a force that overbears all resistance. His "active instruments," that is, his senses and physical powers of action, of which he was so confident, are so far overmastered by the emotions excited by the alleged confession of Cassio, that he loses his senses and falls to the ground in a trance; and his "speculative" faculties are so unfitted for business and are so distracted by outbreaks of passion that he is scarce able to read the letter which the Senate has sent him on public affairs. A gradual degradation and loss of tone creep over the high-souled Moor under the influence of Iago's poison, and he becomes so far debased as to forget Desdemona's sex and his own manhood, and to strike her a blow while giving an audience to Ludovico, the Venetian ambassador; at the same time driving her with contemptuous language from his presence. Ludovico looks on in astonishment and desires Othello to call her back; and in the remarks which ensue, the struggle between reason and passion, between the better and the worsen side of the semi-barbarian is marked, on the one hand, by the words of courtesy and of business addressed to Ludovico, and on the other,



by the fierce ejaculations of passion which he hisses forth to Desdemona.

“ Ay, you did wish that I would make her turn :  
 Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,  
 And turn again ; and she can weep, sir, weep ;  
 And she ’s obedient, as you say, — obedient, —  
 Very obedient ; *proceed you in your tears, —*  
 Concerning this, sir. — *O well painted passion !*  
 I am commanded home : *Get you away ;*  
*I ’ll send for you anon.* — Sir, I obey the mandate,  
 And will return to Venice. *Hence, avaunt !*  
 Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, to-night  
 I do entreat that we may sup together, —  
 You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. — *Goats and monkeys ! ”*

Ludovico very naturally asks, “ Are his *wits safe* ? is he not *light of brain* ? ” — a pungent commentary on the assurance with which this cool-headed and dignified soldier once ridiculed any possible dereliction of duty, through passion on his part, by professing a readiness in such a case to give up to housewives “ for a skillet ” his helm or badge of soldiership.

It should be noted that Desdemona’s personal beauty — and it may be gathered from the dialogue that this was of the most voluptuous cast — never loses its power over the Moor’s sensuous nature ; and it is this grosser element in his love that supplies fuel to his jealousy, and gives Iago access to the lower side of his nature. In the midst of the bitterest invective, Othello can stop to say : —

“ O thou weed,  
 Who art so lovely fair and smell’st so sweet  
 That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne’er been born ! ”

He even fears that her charms may unsettle his resolution to put her to death. He says to Iago, “ Get me some poison, Iago, this night ; I ’ll not expostulate with her, lest *her body and beauty unprovide my mind again.* ” But Iago has no intent that his victim shall resort to any such refinement as poison to execute his design. He will not be satisfied unless he can debase the lofty Moor to the very depth of brutality, reminding us of those serpents in the dreadful *bolgia*, which caused those they stung and empoisoned themselves to become serpents. Appealing, therefore, to Othello’s sense of justice, the better to beguile him, he says : “ Do it not with poison ; *strangle her* in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.” This suggestion, brutal

as it is, falls in with the feeling which Othello cherishes, and which lies back of all his whirl of passion, that it is his *Duty* to put Desdemona to death as a just and proper sacrifice to the opinion of the world as well as to desecrated love and wounded honor. He therefore answers: "*Good, good; the justice of it pleases; very good.*" This perverted sense of duty tends to invest his meditated deed with a dignity that conceals its atrocity from his own eyes. "She must die," he says, "*else she'll betray more men.*" And he enters the fatal chamber with an air of solemnity, as if he had been deputed to execute justice upon some high-condemned criminal. This elevation of sentiment and calm judicial deportment leave room, also, for his better nature to come into play. He allows his love for her to break forth again; her beauty and her sweetness, as he had feared, almost disarm his purpose. "O *balmy breath,*" he exclaims, "that doth almost *persuade justice to break her sword.*" He kisses her, while she sleeps, again and again; he softens even to tears, and deplores alike her fate and the necessity resting upon himself; he likens his action to the chastening blows of heaven, which strike where they do love, and seems, in fact, to have raised himself in a spirit of self-sacrifice to the performance of a high moral purpose. She awakes and learns his terrible intent; she denies vehemently the charges he makes of her loving Cassio; she pleads piteously for her life, and begs that Cassio may be sent for; but upon learning that he is slain by Iago at Othello's instigation, she sees that both Cassio and herself are the victims of some plot, and exclaims, "*Alas, he is betrayed and I undone,*" words innocent in the meaning of the speaker, but which are taken by him in a false acceptance, and as a confession of her guilt; and mistaking also her tears as proofs of her love for her paramour, he is at once lost to all self-government, and, infuriated with jealousy, seizes the helpless lady and strangles her out of hand, — thus converting what he had intended as a solemn sacrifice to duty into a brutal and barbarous murder.

In perpetrating this act Othello recedes from the ideal of Christian manhood as far as hell is from heaven. He is fain to call himself "*an honourable murderer,*" claiming that "*nought he did in hate, but all in honour.*" But Æmilia's comment goes to the root of the matter, and is most pointed and instructive. In one bitterly sarcastic word she condenses her contempt for the



overweening self-estimation that held that the murder of Desdemona was necessary for the reparation of his wounded honor : —

“ O murderous COXCOMB ! what should such a fool  
Do with so good a wife ? ”

Æmilia, by her knowledge of life, furnishes a foil to the simplicity of Desdemona. She is a type of character which may be found in every social circle, — that of the disappointed wife. Her marriage with the loveless Iago has chilled her, and her experience has tinged with acrimony all her views of married life. She, like the others, is a compound of good and evil, of virtue and vice. Still she is good enough to love and admire Desdemona's goodness, and the energetic friendship she displays upon the discovery of the murder of her mistress would cause greater faults than hers to be treated leniently. She fully understands and appreciates Desdemona's sacrifices in marrying Othello. She sees in the circumstances of the match the true motives of Desdemona, and this knowledge gives pungency to her resentment at the “despight and heavy terms” Othello throws upon his wife. Yet she is one who would never have seen Othello's visage in his mind ; on the contrary, she evidently thinks him no beauty, and does not scruple to tell him, when he attempts to justify the murder of his wife on the ground that she was false, that “she was too fond of her most *filthy bargain*.” Æmilia is clearly truthful : she dies vindicating Desdemona's conduct, and her last words are an example of the truth arising from the correspondence of the words with the thought : —

“ Moor, she was chaste ; she lov'd thee, cruel Moor :  
So come my soul to bliss, as *I speak true*,  
So *speaking as I think*, I die, I die.”

Of Cassio, even Iago admits that “there is a daily beauty in his life.” He is honorable, generous, and brave, and, though stained with some youthful vice, he is guarded against any great debasement of morals by his deep reverence for purity and goodness. Desdemona's beauty, both of character and person, call out all the chivalry of his nature, but his regard for her has not the slightest trace of passion ; it is a homage to her virtue, like “the worship the heart lifts above” as to something divine. When she lands at Cyprus he breaks out with genuine enthusiasm, —



"O behold

The riches of the ship is come on shore !  
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees : —  
Hail to thee, lady ! and the grace of heaven  
Before, behind thee, and on every hand  
Enwheel thee round !" —

and subsequently when she promises her aid in restoring him to office, and he says, —

"Bounteous madam,  
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio  
He 's never anything but your true servant," —

he expresses not merely his gratitude for her kind offices, but also his service and devotion to her on the ground of her excellence and ladyhood.

Cassio is directly related to the organic idea by his regard for his reputation. He lives in the opinion of the world ; as his exclamations of grief and shame well prove, after he has been degraded from his office by Othello.

"*Cassio.* Reputation, reputation, reputation ! oh ! I have lost my reputation ! I have lost the immortal part of myself and what remains is bestial. My reputation ! Iago, my reputation !"

Having been entrapped by Iago into drinking to excess, he feels the deepest mortification that his conduct, and particularly his *speech*, had been unworthy of a gentleman and an officer.

"Drunk and *speak* parrot ? and *squabble* ? swagger ? swear ? and *discourse* fustian with one's own shadow ?"

No picture of Society illustrative of an imperfect civilization would be complete without the character of Bianca, the representative of a class which seems to be the ineradicable plague-spot of all civilization. She is the antipode of Desdemona. Her quick jealousy, characteristic of her class, is the direct opposite of Desdemona's unsuspectingness. The difference between them is also strongly marked in their relations to circumstances. Desdemona, strong in her innocence and her rectitude of intention, disregards them, but Bianca's condition in life compels her to sway with the current. She holds her lover by a tenure too frail to exact anything. She says, —

"'T is very good. I must be circumstanc'd."

The leading trait of nearly all the personages of the piece is

thus seen to be a care and concern for character, honor, reputation; they live for the favorable opinion of Society, which they hope to attain by proving their goodness or sufficiency in the performance of duty. But the doctrine that grows out of man's desire to advance his character towards perfection, which practically is effected by the pursuit of good under the form of duty, is moral knowledge or philosophy, which both determines the true nature of "the good" as well as the means of attaining it; and it so turns out that the views of the play-writer on this subject are identical with those of Bacon and the characters and situations of the piece can be used to exemplify Bacon's tenets.

And first it may be remarked that the piece is so constructed as to place the subject of "*duty*" in the foreground, inasmuch as the play brings specially into view Man's relations to Society, that is, the offices and duties that grow out of human intercourse; and all the *dramatis personæ*, with the exception of the Clown and the women, are officers, either civil or military, in actual service of the State. And this again has the additional effect of drawing a broad line between public and private duties. By reason of this feature of the play, it offers illustrative examples of Bacon's doctrine of "The Exemplar or Platform of Good" on the main division of which, into "Private or *Self* Good" and the "good of *communion*" or "*Duty*," he builds his system of moral knowledge. On this subject he takes to task the philosophers for not being sufficiently simple and profound, and says that "if before they had come to the popular and received notions of virtue and vice, pleasure and pain and the rest, they had stayed a little longer upon the inquiry concerning *the roots of good and evil* and the strings of those roots, they had given in my opinion a great light to those questions which followed; and especially if they had consulted with the nature of things, as well as moral axioms, they had made their doctrines less prolix and more profound; which being by them *in part omitted*, and *in part handled with much confusion*, I will briefly resume; and endeavor to open and cleanse the fountains of morality . . . for this will in my opinion reinforce the doctrine of the exemplar with new strength.

"There is formed and imprinted in everything an appetite toward two natures of good; the one as everything is a total or substantive in itself, the other as it is a part or member of a

greater body; whereof the latter is in degree the greater and worthier, because it tends to the conservation of a more general form. The former of these may be termed 'Individual or Self-Good,' the latter the 'Good of Communion.' Iron, in particular sympathy, moves to the loadstone, but yet, if it exceed a certain quantity it forsakes its affection to the loadstone, and like a good patriot moves to the earth, which is the region and country of its connaturals; so again, compact and massy bodies move to the earth, the great collection of dense bodies; and yet rather than suffer a divulsion in nature and create a vacuum, they will move upwards from the centre of the earth, forsaking their duty to the earth in regard to their duty to the world. *Thus it is ever the case that the conservation of the more general form controls and keeps in order the lesser appetites and inclinations.* This prerogative of the communion of good is much more engraven on man, if he be not degenerate; according to that memorable speech of Pompey, when being in commission of purveyance for a famine at Rome, and being dissuaded with great vehemency and instance by his friends about him that he should not hazard himself to sea in an extremity of weather, he said only to them, 'It is needful that I go, not that I live;' so that the love of life, which is the predominant feeling in the individual, did not with him outweigh affection and fidelity to the commonwealth."

It is evident from Bacon's language that he regarded his doctrine of ethical science as original with himself, or at least that such doctrine, as founded in a general law of nature, had been "omitted" or "handled with much confusion" by his predecessors; yet taking the play as a model of practical life there will be found in the characters and in their motives, sentiments, and actions perfectly apposite illustrations of every branch and subdivision of Bacon's doctrine of "The Exemplar of Good."

For instance, the superior claims of the good of the community over that of the individual are plainly admitted by Brabantio, who seeks to excuse his neglect of duty to the commonwealth on the ground of the overwhelming nature of his private affairs, which had left him no room even to think of what as a Senator he owed the public.

"Duke.

Welcome, gentle signior;

We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

Bra. So did I yours: Good your grace, pardon me;



*Neither my place nor aught I heard of business  
Hath rais'd me from my bed ; nor doth the general care  
Take hold on me ; for my particular grief  
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature,  
That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows  
And it is still itself."*

The "good of communion," says Bacon, "respects and beholds society, which we may term *Duty*, . . . and which concerns *the government of every man over himself*. It is subdivided into two parts, whereof one treats of 'the common duty of every man' as a member of a State; the other treats of 'the respective or special duties of every man in his profession, vocation, rank, and character.'

"To this part touching respective duty, do also appertain the mutual duties between husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant; so likewise the laws of friendship and gratitude and the like." De Aug. Book VII. ch. 2.

The rule of duty of every man in his profession and vocation as well as the paramount duty which he owes to the State, is directly referred to by Othello, when, seconding Desdemona's appeal to the Duke to be allowed to accompany her husband to the war, he disclaims the possibility of any interference of his own private good or pleasure with the performance of his public duties.

*"Oth. Let her have your voices.  
Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not  
To please the palate of my appetite,  
.  
.  
.  
But to be free and bounteous to her mind ;  
And heaven defend your good souls, that you think  
I will your serious and great business scant  
For she is with me," etc.*

Othello, in his relations to the State, is the perfection of loyalty and duty, and does not hesitate for an instant to sacrifice his individual wishes and pleasure ("passive good" in Bacon's system) to the public service. Though just married, he is called upon to depart upon a distant and dangerous expedition, to which he at once assents.

*"Duke. The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus :  
Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you : And though we have  
there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress  
of effects, throws a more safer voice on you ; you must therefore be content to*

*slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.*

*Oth. The tyrant custom, most grave senators,  
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war  
My thrice-driven bed of down. I do agnize  
A natural and prompt alacrity  
I find in hardness ; and do undertake  
These present wars against the Ottomites.*

*Duke. The affair cries — haste,  
And speed must answer it ; you must hence to-night.*

*Oth. With all my heart."*

Of the "good of communion," which comprises the discharge of Duty and a desire to benefit and serve others, Desdemona is an example throughout, if we except her breach of filial duty, which, however, she justifies fully to her own conscience. Nothing, according to Bacon (De Aug. Book VII. ch. 1), doth so "highly exalt the good that is communicative and depress the good that is private and particular as the Holy Christian faith." And Desdemona's character, without having any special religious tone or coloring, embraces all the most distinctive elements of Christian excellence. In her the good that is communicative, as exhibited in love and service, shines forth in all its beauty. Not to speak of her devotion as a wife, we may advert to her faithful friendship and zeal to serve Cassio.

"Before Æmilia here

I give thee warrant of thy place ; assure thee  
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it  
To the last article : my lord shall never rest ;  
I'll watch him tame, and talk him out of patience ;  
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift ;  
I'll intermingle everything he does  
With Cassio's suit. *Therefore be merry, Cassio,  
For thy solicitor shall rather die  
Than give thy cause away."*

Desdemona carries "the good of communion" to its extreme limit. Speaking of this kind of good Bacon says (De Aug. Book VII. ch. 1), in a passage similar to one already quoted from his essay on "Goodness," that "some of the elected saints of God have wished rather than that their brethren should not obtain salvation that they themselves should be anathematised and erased out of the book of life, in an ecstasy of charity and infinite feeling of communion."

In a like manner and spirit Desdemona dies with a lie upon her lips, thereby incurring a similar penalty, — or, as Othello says, "*like a liar goes to burning hell*," — in order that she might testify her love and promote the good of her husband, under whose murderous hands she is even then dying.<sup>1</sup>

"The knowledge concerning good respecting Society," Bacon proceeds to say, "(as well as that which respects Individual good) handles it not simply alone, but *comparatively*, whereunto belongs the weighing of duties between person and person, case and case, particular and public, present and future," etc.

The weighing of duties between person and person is pointedly instanced in Desdemona's excusing her marriage to the Moor.

"*Brabantio. Come hither, gentle mistress ;  
Do you perceive in all this noble company,  
Where most you owe obedience ?  
Desdemona. My noble father,  
I do perceive here a divided duty ;  
To you I am bound for life and education ;  
My life and education both do learn me  
How to respect you ; you are the lord of duty,  
I am hitherto your daughter ; but here's my husband,  
And so much duty as my mother show'd  
To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Here to the Moor, my lord."*

In the case of Æmilia there is also a weighing of duties between what she owes to her husband and what she owes to her mistress and the public. Finding Desdemona murdered, and readily divining from the circumstances that her husband, Iago (who lays his command upon her to be silent and to return home), has instigated the deed, she insists upon speaking.

<sup>1</sup> The following is an historical instance of this "infinite feeling of communion :"

When in 1535 the Charter House Monks (Carthusian) in London were called upon to take — under penalty of death if they refused — the oath of allegiance to Henry VIII. as Head of the Church, which they could not in conscience do, John Houghton, the prior, proposed to his fraternity that he should save their lives by offering himself as representative of the house and swearing falsely. His words are : "Me and the elder brethren they will kill ; and they will dismiss you that are young into a world that is not for you. If therefore it depends on me alone — if my oath will suffice for the house, I will throw myself for your sakes on the mercy of God. I will make myself anathema, and to preserve you from this danger I will consent to the king's will." *Froude, Hist. Vol. II. p. 345.*

The writer of *Othello* may well have been acquainted with this fact.



"*Æmilia.* Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak.

'*Tis proper I obey him, but not now.*

Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home," etc.

*Private*, or *Self-Good*, Bacon divides into *Active* and *Passive*. The active is that which leads men to enterprises and pursuits, on the accomplishment of which they have set their hearts, and success in which is one of the highest gratifications; for, as Bacon adds, "there is no man's spirit so soft and effeminate but esteems the *effecting of somewhat he has fixed in his desire more than any pleasure or sensuality.*"

The desire of "active good" prompts all laudable ambition. Othello draws a glowing picture of it in his address to the Senate (which need not be quoted), in which he gives an account of a life spent in travels, enterprises, and battles for the sake of gratifying a love of adventure, and for the honor to be won by heroic deeds. It should be observed, however, that this kind of good must be pursued without doing injury to others (which is, perhaps, but seldom the case), and Bacon gives us the admonition "that this active individual good has no identity with the good of society, though in some case it has an incidence into it . . . for that gigantic state of mind which possesses the troublers of the world (such as was Lucius Sylla and *infinite others in smaller model*, who are bent on having all men happy or unhappy as they are friends or enemies) . . . this I say aspires to the active good of the individual (apparent good, at least), though it *recedes farthest of all from the good of society.*" De Aug. Book VII. ch. ii.

Of these "infinite others in smaller model" who pursue their selfish and wicked aims for the purpose of making their enemies, or those they consider such, unhappy, Iago, who might say with Satan, "Evil, be thou my good," is a notable instance. He, however, always affects the good of others and wears the mask of Duty, but he is the extreme example of *Self-Good*. His rule of action he states in giving Roderigo reasons for his following Othello.

"I follow him to serve my turn upon him :

We cannot all be masters, nor all masters

Cannot be truly follow'd.

• • • • •  
In following him I follow but myself ;

*Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,  
But seeming so, for my peculiar end," etc.*

And in his cynical way he sketches the two classes of character who pursue respectively the real and the apparent good : those who do their duty in their offices and vocations, and those who pursue their interest alone.

"You shall mark

Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,  
That, doating on his own obsequious bondage,  
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,  
For nought but provender ; and when he's old, cashier'd :  
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are,  
Whom trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,  
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves ;  
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,  
Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lin'd their coats,  
Do themselves homage : these fellows have some soul,  
And such a one do I profess myself," etc.

Iago softens the extremely disagreeable things he has to say to Othello about his wife by alleging that he is discharging the office of a friend, and is prompted by a sense of duty, or by love and honesty, which practically are but other names for duty. Thus when Othello declares that he is above jealousy, Iago says : —

"I am glad of this, for now I shall have reason  
To show the *love and duty* that I bear you  
With franker spirit. Therefore, as *I am bound*,  
Receive it from me."

And again he says : —

"I am much to blame.  
I humbly do beseech your pardon  
For too much loving you."

By this affectation of love and duty Iago gives point to the masterly outburst, half expostulation, half apostrophe, with which he parries the wakened wrath of Othello, who, tortured by Iago's insinuations beyond endurance, had seized the slanderer and discharged his rage upon him.

"O grace ! O heaven defend me !  
Are you a man ? have you a soul or sense ?  
God be wi' you ; take mine office. O wretched fool,  
That liv'st to make thine honesty a vice !  
O monstrous world ! Take note, take note, O world,

To be *direct and honest is not safe.*  
 I thank you for this *profit*; and, from hence,  
*I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence."*

And again: —

"*Oth.* Give me a living reason she's disloyal.  
*Iago.* I do not like the office,  
 But sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,  
 Prick'd to it by foolish *honesty and love,*  
 I will go on."

The "good" which Iago pursues is the intensest form of "Active Self-Good," which, in his case, takes the form of the gratification of his malignity by ruining the happiness of others and at the same time rising by their fall.

Iago's pleasures are wholly intellectual. He cares nothing for the enjoyment of the sense, but so long as his brain is busy with his plots and schemes he is in the best of spirits; and in this respect he exemplifies the following passage, in which Bacon comments on the superiority of the "active good."

"In enterprises, pursuits, and purposes of life, there is much variety, whereof men are sensible with pleasure in the conception, progressions, rests, recoils, redintegrations, approaches, and attainings to their ends; so as it was well said 'Life without a purpose is unsettled and languid;' " and in his Essay on Negotiating, he remarks: "In all negotiations of difficulty, *a man must not look to sow and reap at once, but must prepare business and so ripen it by degrees.*"

Iago teaches Roderigo the same doctrine and manifests the same keen enjoyment from the prosecution of his plans.

"*Iago.* How poor are they that have not patience;  
 What wound did ever *heal but by degrees*?  
 Thou know'st *we work by wit* and not by witchcraft;  
 And *wit depends on dilatory time.*  
 Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,  
 And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd Cassio;  
 Though other things grow fair against the sun,  
*Yet fruits that blossom first, will first be ripe.*  
*Content thyself awhile.* By the mass, 't is morning;  
*Pleasure and action make the hours seem short."*

The Self-Good which is called Passive is subdivided by Bacon into Good Conservative and Good Perfective, "whereof that of perfecting is the highest, for to preserve a thing in its existing



state is the less, to raise the same is the greater." This last looks to a real exaltation and advancement of man's nature and happiness.

"The good of Conservation consists in the reception and fruition of that which is agreeable to our natures, which, though it seems to be the most pure and natural of pleasures, is yet the softest and lowest."

And this latter good also receives a difference, for the good of fruition, or, as it is termed, *pleasure* (or comfort, content, etc.), is placed either in the sincerity of the fruition or in the vigor of it, the first being the result of equality or constancy, the other of variety and change. The pleasure derivable from variety or change is repeatedly and emphatically mentioned by Iago. See his argument to Roderigo, Act I. Sc. 3.

The difficulty of securing constancy in fruition inspires the fear which throws its shadow on Othello's happiness on being reunited to Desdemona at Cyprus.

"*Oth.* It gives me wonder great as *my content*  
To see you here before me. *O my soul's joy!*  
If after every tempest come such calms  
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!

If it were now to die  
'*T were now to be most happy; for I fear*  
*My soul hath her content so absolute*  
*That not another comfort like to this*  
*Succeeds in unknown fate."*

In Desdemona's reply there is a wish for the "*perfective good*."

"The heavens forbid  
But that our *loves and comforts* should increase,  
*Even as our days do grow."*

And in the following lines we see that the wish is habitual with her for the attainment of the really perfective good.

"Heaven *me such usage send*  
Not to pick bad from bad, *but by bad mend."*

Roderigo's suit to Desdemona is an instance of the pursuit of the "Passive Good," while Cassio is divided between the Active and Passive, his relations with Bianca being an instance of the latter, and his suit to be restored to his office for the sake of his reputation of the former.

The play, therefore, apparently covers the whole ground of Bacon's doctrine of "the platform or essence of good," and is a "living model" which shows in its characters, their actions, thoughts, opinions, and sentiments the practical application of abstract and scientific truths, — thus clothing the dry bones of philosophy with the flesh and blood of dramatic life.

But the pursuit of the Good, real or apparent, or, in less formal language, the prosecution of the plans and objects which men strive to attain, makes up the mass of human concerns; and success in such pursuit is that which brings all the fruit, pleasure, and contentment of life. There is consequently a constant exercise of the mind in determining what is good and how to attain it; what is evil and how to avoid it; particularly so far as these questions concern the relations, plans, and conduct of men. For men use other men as instruments, and mould and work them by suits, solicitations, persuasions. This we see in the play; each one of the characters has his suit to some other. But that a selection of an agent may be prudently made, it is necessary that men should be known and judged exactly as they are, which can only be done by weighing virtues against faults, and correctly estimating their honesty, knowledge, skill, sufficiency. The best proof, however, of such ability is actual trial and experience, the proof of the senses; the next, reputation or opinion, which last kind of proof is mere words, yet must in a great majority of cases be relied upon. And in the play this distinction is made in the judgments which the characters pass upon one another; some are known practically for experienced men, others are mere theorists. And these judgments are not merely with regard to public or business duties, but extend to the conduct of all persons in every station, rank, or vocation of life; as to husband and wife, parent and child, and the like.

Iago places his hatred of the Moor on the ground that he had given no ear to his suit for the lieutenantancy; on the contrary, he had slighted his soldierly qualities, —

"Of which *his eyes had seen the proof*  
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds  
Christian and heathen," —

yet passing him by, had bestowed the office on Cassio, a mere theorist, —

"Who had never set a squadron in the field  
Nor the division of a battle knew  
More than a spinster,"

whose soldiership, in short, was "mere *prattle without practice*."

The "sufficiency" of Othello, in which the Senate places so much trust, is *approved* by actual service; and to this also Montano bears witness.

"I have serv'd him, and the man commands  
Like a *full soldier*."

So, too, Cassio builds his hope of Othello's escape from the storm on the known skill of his pilot.

"His bark is stoutly timber'd and his pilot  
Of *very expert and approv'd allowance*."

It is only, however, a very small part of our knowledge that is "approved" or certain, because derived from direct and personal observation. Of the truth of by far the greater part of it, we have only an "assurance," which amounting often perhaps to a moral certainty, is yet no more than a high degree of probability. With such "assurances" the play abounds. These apparent truths or "assurances" are derived from reasoning, that is, from inferences and proofs, which processes constitute the ordinary natural operation of the reasoning faculty; the mind being habitually employed, even in the most ignorant and illiterate, in assigning reasons for opinions or conduct, or in persuading and working upon others, or in inferring conclusions from facts and circumstances, according to what experience has taught to be true or customary in like cases. Of course, the accuracy or ability with which these processes are conducted will depend in a great measure upon the amount of previous knowledge acquired. But they are the same in the most ignorant as in the most learned, and are exercised in the common affairs of life as it were, spontaneously. This mode of reasoning, however, which answers well enough for the ordinary affairs of life, is very superficial and gives rise to innumerable erroneous conclusions; for the sense is often imperfect or mistaken, and outward circumstances, which are all the sense can take note of, are wholly unessential, and may be attributed to various causes; and be equally interpreted by charity or by malice, for which reason no conclusions should be founded on them until they have been subjected to the strictest examination. Yet it is precisely



such conclusions, drawn in this touch and glance sort of way, which men are ever using and appealing to as truths, in their attempts to persuade or convince others. And the poet, therefore, holding his mirror up to nature so as to reflect faithfully a picture of Man in society, with his "imperfect pursuit of the Good," that is, of virtue and duty, and his consequent imperfect civilization, shows us his characters gathering and exchanging knowledge by adducing proofs or drawing inferences from the current circumstances of the day, and particularly from the words and conduct of their fellows, thereby causing the play to exhibit both the natural action of the reason and also the errors into which it is liable to fall through hasty judgments; on which account the piece can be taken as a collection of varied examples to elucidate Bacon's strictures (laid down in his *Art of Judging*) upon the imperfection of the mind's natural method of concluding upon the perceptions of the sense, and the consequent necessity of adhering to some rule in the investigation of truth. But before adverting more particularly to the coincidences of the play with Bacon's doctrines on this head, it will be well to examine a few scenes in order to mark the ingenuity and skill with which the dialogue, while developing the characters and carrying forward the business of the play, is so woven as continually to present some instance of the exercise of the judgment in drawing inferences and proofs from circumstances.

The play opens with an inference made by Roderigo that Iago has deceived him in pretending enmity to the Moor, since the circumstance of Iago's being acquainted with Othello's clandestine marriage proves that he is on the most confidential and friendly footing with him; this inference Iago rebuts by pointing to the ill-treatment he has received at Othello's hands respecting the lieutenancy, and adds:—

*"Now, sir, be judge yourself*

*If I in any just terms am affined  
To love the Moor."*

Brabantio, being called up at dead of night by the clamor of Roderigo and Iago, asks "the reason of this terrible summons," and infers from time and place that Roderigo is maliciously disturbing his quiet, and therefore accuses him of rude and boisterous manners, but Roderigo alleges the flight of Desdemona

and his desire to give Brabantio knowledge of it as a sufficient excuse for his apparent rudeness.

Sc. 2. Brabantio accuses Othello of having abused Desdemona with "drugs and minerals," and appeals to the probabilities of the case as a sufficient proof of the charge.

*"Judge me the world if 't is not gross in sense,  
That thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms.  
. . . I'll have it disputed on ;  
'T is probable and palpable to thinking," etc.*

Scene 3 is a council chamber, where the Duke and Senators are discussing the contradictory reports respecting the movements of the Turkish fleet, and endeavoring by sifting the circumstances to arrive at some conclusion with regard to the designs of the Turks. The dialogue is too long to quote ; it has no particular bearing upon the action of the piece, and seems introduced purposely as a pointed instance of conclusions derived from circumstances interpreted by the light of experience.

Brabantio enters and makes his charge against Othello of having corrupted his daughter by spells and medicines, and grounds his accusation on the fact that Desdemona could not in the nature of things have acted voluntarily.

*"For nature so preposterously to err  
(Being not deficient, blind, nor lame of sense)  
Sans witchcraft could not," etc.*

And again he refers to Desdemona's circumstances, "her years, her country, credit, everything," as proofs that she had not acted freely.

*"It is a judgment maim'd and most imperfect  
That will confess perfection so could err  
Against all rules of nature," etc.*

To which the Duke replies : —

*"To vouch this is no proof  
Without more certain and more overt acts  
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods  
Of modern seeming do prefer against him," etc.*

Othello answers the charge by stating that the only witchcraft he had used was the interest he had excited by a recital of the circumstances of his life, which, falling in with all experience and probability, disproves the accusation ; the Duke remarking : —

"I think this tale would win my daughter too."

The Duke then makes use of certain paradoxes to console Brabantio, which are, of course, in keeping with the dialectical style of the piece.

This is followed by Iago's speech to Roderigo, in order to persuade him to follow the wars in the hope of gaining the love of Desdemona, — grounding his argument on the circumstances attending her marriage to the Moor, and the mutability of the sex.

Act II. Sc. 1: Montano and gentlemen watching for vessels from the cape, and commenting on the great storm of the night before, infer the destruction of the Turkish fleet.

*Mon. What shall we hear of this ?*

*2 Gent. A segregation of the Turkish fleet :*

*For do but stand upon the foaming shore,  
The chiding billows seem to pelt the clouds.*

*Mon. If that the Turkish fleet*

*Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd ;*

*It is impossible they bear it out."*

Besides the examples cited, which are the more prominent ones, the dialogue is filled in with many minute instances of proofs, arguments, and inferences so unobtrusive and spontaneous that no attention is attracted to their logical character, as, for instance, this inference from a salute on the arrival of a vessel : —

*"They do discharge their shot of courtesy,  
Our friends at least."*

And again : —

*"They give their greeting to the citadel :  
This likewise is a friend."*

These are the syllogisms of common speech, and belong to the natural action of the mind.

The object here is to show that the dialogue of the play is a web of inference and proof from circumstance, — broken, it is true, here and there by passages illustrative of doctrines of Bacon other than his "Art of Judging," yet in the main argumentative throughout.

Iago's "old fond paradoxes," which he invents in answer to Desdemona's request that he should praise her, are of course argumentative.



Act II. Sc. 3: Iago naturally infers from the circumstance that Cassio, Roderigo, and the "three lads of Cyprus" have been drinking too freely, that it will be easy "to put Cassio in some action that will offend the isle."

"If consequence do but approve my dream,  
My boat sails freely both with wind and stream."

In this soliloquy — and in all his soliloquies — Iago discusses with himself his plans. All plans rest on a knowledge of causes and the necessary inference that certain causes will produce certain effects. Iago throughout aims at the production of effects, and this he does by touching, as one profoundly skilled in human nature, those springs of action which are the causes of conduct.

Othello ironically infers from the brawl on the court of guard that they had turned Turks.

"From whence ariseth this ?  
*Are we turn'd Turks and to ourselves do that*  
Which heaven hath deni'd the Ottomites ?"

Othello also argues the heinousness of Cassio's breach of discipline from the circumstances of time and place.

"What ! in a town of war,  
*Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,*  
To manage private and domestic quarrel,  
*In night and on the court and guard of safety !*  
'Tis monstrous."

Act III. Sc. 3: This great scene is professedly made up of inferences and proofs founded on circumstances.

In the following lines, Desdemona refers to the loss of her handkerchief as a circumstance which might furnish a ground for dangerous inference.

"And but my noble Moor  
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness  
As jealous natures are, *it were enough*  
*To put him to ill thinking."*

The minutest circumstances are often relied upon to support the weightiest conclusions. Othello inquires of Æmilia what she has seen or heard that will imply familiarity between Cassio and Desdemona.

"Did they never whisper ? nor send you out o' the way ?  
To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing ?"

Æmilia scouts the notion that Desdemona is untrue, and asks what circumstances can be alleged as signs of her guilt ?

"Who keeps her company?"

*What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?"*

The following is an instance of a non-significant circumstance. Desdemona says:—

"Mine eyes do itch ;

Doth that bode weeping?"

Æmilia replies:—

"'Tis *neither here nor there*,"—

it is a circumstance that has no consequence.

The foregoing examples are probably sufficient to show that the dialogue of the piece is, to a very great extent, made up of arguments and inferences based upon circumstantial evidence,—the one great instance of which is the proof alleged by Iago of Desdemona's guilt.

Another point, however, should be remarked upon before leaving the consideration of the doctrine of "the Good," and taking up the mind's imperfect method of concluding, that is, the necessity of knowing evil as well as good.

Bacon holds that a knowledge of evil is necessary for the protection of virtue. He says: "There belongeth further to the handling of this point touching the duties of professions and vocations, a relative or opposite, touching the frauds, cautels, impostures, and vices of every profession. . . . The managing of this argument with integrity and truth, which *I note as deficient*, seemeth to me to be one of the *best fortifications* for *honesty and virtue* that can be planted. For as the fable goeth of the basilisk, that if he see you first you die for it, but if you see him first he dieth; so is it with deceits and evil arts, which if they be first espied they lease their life, but if they prevent they endanger. So that we are much beholden to Machiavelli and others that write what men do and not what they ought to do. For it is not possible to join *serpentine wisdom* with the *columbine innocence*, except *men know all the conditions of the serpent*, his baseness and going upon his belly, his volubility and lubricity, his envy and sting and the rest, that is, *all forms and natures of evil*. For without this, *virtue lieth open and unfenced*." Adv. p. 327, Boston ed.

The want of this knowledge of evil is the great defect in the character both of Othello and Desdemona. They both are ignorant of the world, and at the same time cherish a trust in others,

which though prompted by the truth of their own souls, yet lays them open and unfenced against the most dangerous deceptions. Desdemona's purity is such that she is even ignorant of the existence of some kinds of vice, and is like one of those of whom the Apostle speaks, as "wise unto that which is good and simple unto that which is evil." So far from being guilty of the sin alleged against her by Othello, she does not believe that any woman is or ever was guilty of such abuse. She says:—

"I do not think that there is any such woman."

In her advocacy of Cassio's suit, likewise, she does not dream that her zeal can be looked upon as a proof of her fondness for him. And even after she has found that her solicitations have given offense—which would have opened the eyes of any woman not absolutely incapable of suspecting that she is suspected—she gives Cassio fresh assurances.

"So help me every spirit sanctified,  
As I have spoken for you all my best  
And stood within the blank of his displeasure,  
*For my free speech.*  
What I can do I will, and more I will  
*Than for myself I dare."*

This promise is one of those errors of goodness which Bacon, in his Essay on Goodness, speaks of: "Beware how in making the portraiture, thou breakest the pattern. For divinity maketh *the love of ourselves the pattern, the love of our neighbour the portraiture.*" Desdemona breaks the pattern, for she unwittingly ruins herself in her excess of zeal for Cassio.

Innocence so helpless as Desdemona's lies utterly unfenced against envy and malice, and can find protection only in the confidence of a husband possessed of a knowledge of human nature so deep and subtle as to be able to discern her truth and self-sacrifice under all the duplicity of circumstance; but alas! Othello is but a little less simple and unsophisticated than Desdemona herself; and, indeed, it is felt and frequently remarked that Othello is too easily convinced of Desdemona's guilt, the slightest inquiry about which would have brushed away at once Iago's fine-spun web of calumny. The dramatist, however, is not forgetful of this point, but gives it special attention and lays a foundation for the probability of his picture in the circumstances of his hero's life.



For although Othello has adopted Christianity, he is still Moorish, African, barbaric ; and it was a stroke of great dramatic skill, — and one, moreover, which shows the design of the poet — so to construct the action of the piece (of which in this respect there is not the faintest hint in the original novel) as to oblige Othello, in order to rebut the charges of Brabantio, to give an account of his career from boyhood up, for we are thus enabled to see in the antecedents of the character the sources both of its strength and its weakness. He tells us that

“ Since his arms had *seven years’ pith*  
Till now, some nine moons wasted, they have us’d  
Their *dearest action in the tented field*,  
And *little of this great world can I speak*,  
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle.”

He is, therefore, a skillful and practiced soldier, and this qualification in connection with his high and heroic mould of mind gives him, barbarian as he is, a prominent standing with the Venetian Senate ; but outside of his peculiar field of thought he has no attainments ; his only education has been gained in “ the tented field,” but of “ the great world ” and of society, their holowness and intrigues, he has little or no knowledge, much less has he of scholastic training, or habits of analysis or methods of inquiry.<sup>1</sup> Men of well-disciplined minds are alert in detecting falsehood, if not in discovering truth ; they see at a glance the invalidity of an argument or the weak link in a chain of evidence. Of this kind of penetration, Othello has but little. Frank and truthful, he is as trusting and simple-minded as a child. He has retained and carried into manhood much of that credulity which is so beautiful as well as so useful in childhood, but which wears away as years bring experience of the world, until in old age it is, in most cases, replaced by skepticism and distrust. But Othello’s life, remote from the haunts of men, has kept his feelings fresh

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus (Bacon’s favorite historian) makes a similar comment on the want of subtilty and nice discrimination in the minds of military men : —

“ Credunt plerique militaribus ingeniis subtilitatem deesse, quia castrensis jurisdictio secura et obtusior ac plura manu agens calliditatem fori non exerceat.” *De Vita Agric.* ch. ix.

This is rendered by Murphy : “ The military mind trained up in the school of war is generally supposed to want the power of nice discrimination. The jurisdiction of the camp is little solicitous about forms and subtle reasoning ; military law is blunt and summary, and when the sword resolves all difficulties the refined discussions of the forum are never practiced.”

and preserved his faith in human nature. He accepts implicitly the statement of any one who has gained his confidence, without a doubt of possible error or deception. Like most men of fine natures, who have led rough lives afar from cities and the arts of civilization, he sets a great value on that culture and knowledge of which the circumstances of his own life have deprived him. Of Iago's worldly wisdom and Desdemona's accomplishments he is emphatic in his admiration, but throughout the play, although he impresses us with his ability as a soldier and his faculty of command, he lets fall no deep reflection, makes no pregnant suggestion, utters no maxim of life. But inasmuch as he possesses a strong imagination, an active fancy, and ardent passions, his speech about the men and things which fall under his observation attains a force and eloquence which looks like intellectual strength, and as such speech, moreover, is frequently adorned with imagery drawn from the strange and distant lands he has visited, it wears an air of general knowledge which veils his ignorance. But he is without the spirit of inquiry or the habit of investigating truth; in short, he is without learning, and hence he lacked one great element of civility, for, to quote the words of Bacon, "learning taketh away the wildness and barbarism of minds; it taketh away all levity and temerity by *copious suggestions of doubts and difficulties* and *acquainting the mind to balance reasons on both sides and to accept nothing but examined and tried.*"

Such being the credulity and simplicity of Othello's mind, it is quite natural that he should be convinced upon Iago's bare but consummately skillful statement — and that, too, without any examination into the facts — that Desdemona is unfaithful to him. He charges her with being false; she very naturally asks, — it being the first time she has ever heard the accusation or suspected its existence, —

"To whom, my lord? with whom? how am I false?" —

the very form of the questions showing her ignorance of his meaning; but he, preoccupied and dominated by the "strong conception" of her guilt, or with what Iago significantly calls "his *unbookish* jealousy," makes no pertinent reply to these most reasonable questions, — a single word would have led to a full explanation, — but burying himself still deeper in his ignorance, only ejaculates: —

“O Desdemon, away, away, away !”

With such a want of the spirit of inquiry to deal with, Iago, that unrivaled player upon the chords of the human heart, has little difficulty in accomplishing his avowed purpose of making Othello “egregiously an ass.”

This result, moreover, justifies Æmilia’s sneers, who, upon finding her mistress murdered, readily sees through the villainy, and heaps reproaches upon the Moor for his folly.

“O fool ! O dolt !

As ignorant as dirt !”

And Othello, himself, when his eyes are once opened to his rash and precipitate belief in Iago’s story, has but one comment.

“O fool, *fool*, FOOL !”

The depth of error and ignorance into which Othello is plunged by his trust in Iago and his culpable negligence to inquire into the particulars of the charge against his wife, is put before us with a covert sarcasm, that is, provided the play is read for its philosophy and not merely for its poetry ; for, since to know truly is to know through causes, Othello, upon entering the chamber for the purpose of murdering one who, in fact, is perfectly innocent of all offense, is made to justify his act and show, at the same time the blindness of his mind, by saying, —

“It is the *cause*, it is the *cause*, my soul.

Let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars,

It is *the cause*.”

It may be remarked that as by drawing Othello with the simplicity and ignorance of the semi-barbarian, — or to use his own comparison, of “*the base Indian*, who threw a pearl away richer than all his tribe,” — the poet gives probability to the success of Iago’s machinations, so, by portraying in all their grandeur the passions that lurk in his African blood, he emphasizes those qualities of human nature which are the source of the barbarism of Society. And furthermore, as by depicting Othello without learning, and of no acquirements beyond his professional sphere, the poet renders him a better representative of a semi-civilization, so also by the same means he puts him forward as a type of the natural action of the mind unbiased by any scientific method ; and on this account he becomes a notable exponent of those errors



which Bacon is ever inveighing against, and which proceed from the innate propensity of the mind when left to its own action to draw rash and premature conclusions from a few and inadequate particulars. But let us quote a few passages from Bacon, which will set forth his views on this head in his own words.

"The *conclusions of human reason as ordinarily applied in matter of nature* I call for the sake of distinction, *Anticipations of nature as a thing rash and premature.*" Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 26.

"That I call *Anticipations, the voluntary collections that the mind maketh of knowledge, which is every man's reason.* That though this is a solemn thing and serves the turn to negotiate between man and man (because of the conformity and participation of men's minds in the like errors), yet towards enquiry of the truth of things and works, *it is of no value.*" Of Interpretation of Nature, ch. xv.

"For the winning of assent anticipations are more powerful than interpretations; because being collected from a few instances and those for the most part of familiar occurrence, they straitway touch the understanding and fill the imagination." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 28.

"In sciences *founded on opinion and dogma . . .* the use of anticipations and logic is good, for in them the object is *to command assent to the proposition and not to master the thing.*" Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 29.

Quotations from Bacon pointing to the evils arising from men's severing and withdrawing their thoughts too soon and too far from experience and particulars, and giving themselves up to their own meditations and arguments, might be multiplied *ad libitum*. But the foregoing are sufficient to indicate how apt an illustration of this general error in the natural operation of the reason is found in the formation of Othello's judgments and opinions; but — to be more particular — the condition of Othello's intellect makes him "an actual type and model by which the entire process of the mind is set before the eyes" with respect to those prejudices and rooted opinions which Bacon styles "The Idols of the Tribe," so designated because they are common to human nature, and which he says "have so beset men's minds that truth can hardly find an entrance." Of these idols, which are very numerous, — and by idols, Bacon, who sometimes through

exuberance of fancy is fantastic in his nomenclature, means illusions, fallacies, deceptions, — one class he describes as follows: “The human understanding, when it has once adopted an opinion, *draws all things else to support and agree with it.* And though there be a greater number and weight of instances to be found on the other side, yet these it either neglects and despises, or else *by some distinction sets aside and rejects*, prejudging the matter to a great and pernicious extent in order *that its former conclusions may remain inviolate.*” Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 46.

This is an exact description of Othello’s mental condition. Like the great mass of mankind, having once adopted an opinion, which he does from a few particulars and without examination into the facts, he clings to it in spite of every evidence to the contrary. He draws all circumstances, all appearances, almost every word he hears, “to support and agree with it.” For instance, he inquires of Æmilia whether she has noted any suspicious circumstances implying Desdemona’s guilt, and although Æmilia gives the clearest and most unequivocal testimony to the blamelessness of Desdemona, he “rejects” and “sets it aside” as untrustworthy because it conflicts with his preconceptions.

*“She says enough ; — yet she ’s a simple bawd  
That cannot say as much. This is . . .  
A closet-lock-and-key of villainous secrets ;  
And yet she ’ll kneel and pray ; I have SEEN her do ’t.”*

Here Othello willfully throws aside the evidence of his senses which he has to Æmilia’s conscientiousness, and adopts his own gratuitous and groundless suspicion of her want of veracity, merely because her testimony tends to overthrow an opinion firmly lodged in his mind, — a very common case of self-delusion and “an idol of the tribe.”

But the doctrine of idols is one subdivision of Bacon’s Art of Judging, which, he says, “handles the nature of proofs and demonstrations. In this art the conclusion is made either by induction or syllogism. For enthymemes and examples are but abridgments of these two.”

Bacon divides the Art of Judging by Syllogism into Analytic, or the true form of consequence in argument and the doctrine concerning the detection of fallacies, that is, of *sophistical* fallacies, of fallacies of *interpretation*, and of *false appearances* or *idols*.

With regard to *fallacies of interpretation*, he remarks "that common and general notions enter necessarily into every discussion, so that unless great care be taken to distinguish them well at the outset, all the light of disputation will be strangely clouded by them, and the matter end in disputes about words. For *equivocations* and *false acceptations of words* are the sophisms of *sophisms*." De Aug. Book V. ch. iv.

Of *fallacies of interpretation*, that is, of the errors that arise from the false acceptations of words, the play contains numerous examples; as it does also of a certain class of "idols" which Bacon considered the most troublesome of all, and with which the fallacies of interpretation have a close relation. These are "the idols" formed by the intercourse and association of men with each other, "which," says Bacon, "I call *Idols of the Market-Place* on account of the commerce and consort of men there. For it is by discourse that men associate, and words are imposed according to the apprehension of the vulgar. And therefore *the ill and unfit choice of words wonderfully obstructs the understanding*." Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 43.

It is very fitting that such errors and fallacies should find a place in a play which gives a portrayal of Society in its fundamental features, and therefore there are many examples of mistakes, misunderstandings, false acceptations, and equivocations of words in the piece, — of which the scene between Othello, Ludovico, and Desdemona is an instance.

"Des. And what's the news, good cousin Ludovico?

Iago. I am very glad to see you, signor:

Welcome to Cyprus.

Lud. I thank you. How does lieutenant Cassio?

Iago. Lives, sir.

Des. Cousin, there's fallen between him and my lord

An unkind breach: but *you shall make all well*.

Oth. *Are you sure of that?*

Des. My lord?

Oth. *This fail you not to do, as you will.* [Reads.]

Lud. He did not call; he's busy in the paper.

Is there division 'twixt thy lord and Cassio?

Des. A most unhappy one; I would do much

To atone them, *for the love I bear to Cassio*.

Oth. *Fire and brimstone!*

Des. My lord?

Oth. *Are you wise?*



- Des. What, is he angry ?  
 Lud. May be the letter mov'd him ;  
 For, as I think, they do *command him home*,  
*Deputing Cassio in his government.*  
 Des. By my troth, *I am glad on 't.*  
 Oth. Indeed ?  
 Des. My lord ?  
 Oth. I am glad to see you mad.  
 Des. *How, sweet Othello ?*  
 Oth. Devil ! [*Striking her.*]

Of the "ill and unfit choice of words which obstruct the understanding," there is an example in the unfortunate use by Desdemona of the word "*committed.*" "Alas," she says, wondering at some obscure though deeply passionate allusions of Othello, which seemingly point at misconduct on her part, —

"Alas ! what ignorant sin have I *committed ?*" —

which word "*committed*" being the one used in the Seventh Commandment with reference to the very sin of which Othello is then accusing her, arouses all his wrath (for he thinks it spoken through sheer impudence), and draws from him a torrent of invective.

"What *committed !*

*Committed !* O thou public commoner !  
 I should make very forges of my cheeks  
 That would to cinders burn up modesty,  
 Did I but speak thy deeds. *What committed !*  
 Heaven stops the nose at it," etc.

And again Bacon says: "In the whole of the process which leads from the sense and objects to axioms and conclusions, the demonstrations which we use are deceptive and incompetent. . . . In the first place, *the impressions of the sense are faulty, for the sense both fails us and deceives us.* . . . In the second place, *notions are ill-drawn from the impressions of the senses, and are indefinite and confused,*" etc. Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 69.

The mistakes which arise from the deceptions of the senses, and the misinterpretation of their notices, are exemplified in the delusion Othello falls into while watching Cassio in conversation with Iago. While Cassio talks and laughs about the over-fond Bianca, Othello marks "the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns that dwell in every region of his face," and supposes that these refer to Desdemona and himself, or, as Iago says, "he construes

poor Cassio's *smiles, gestures, and light behaviour quite in the wrong.*" It is a conclusion drawn from signs without proper examination into facts, yet it suffices to embitter his soul, and prompts the deadliest feelings of revenge. *Vide* Act IV. Sc. 1.

As for "sophistical fallacies," or ordinary sophisms, they are exemplified in various forms, particularly by Iago. They pertain chiefly to rhetoric, and on that account the piece offers an admirable example of the use, or rather the abuse, of rhetoric in the affairs of life. This, too, connects itself with the pursuit of "the Good," for such pursuit involves a consideration both of the end arrived at and the *means* used. But men, as has been said, are the chief *means used*, and men are worked upon by suits and *persuasions*. In moral questions, popular and common opinions are valid premises for argument, and the deductive logic is admissible to arrive at conclusions, the object being to influence opinion and force assent, and not to establish the truth of things. The danger of this method is that it is open to false conclusions through sophistry, — a danger made apparent in the most startling manner in this tragedy. But the Deductive Method is exemplified in *The Winter's Tale*, which play, however, presents it in a different view from *Othello*, the object of *The Winter's Tale* apparently being to illustrate not so much the pernicious use of the deductive method itself as to show that where the investigation of truth depends upon it no progress is made in discovery except by the agency of Time and Chance; in other words, *The Winter's Tale* exemplifies ordinary logic as leading to theory, and as being unfit for the investigation of nature. But *Othello* displays the use of deductive logic in *Operative Philosophy*, or the *production* of effects, and is in that play applied to the influencing of men to action and the effecting of plans and purposes, and illustrates forcibly the danger of being led both to a false conclusion and a fatal line of conduct by sophistical arguments, whether drawn from circumstances, from deceptions of the sense, or from false testimony, and it is a warning not to trust to conclusions in matters of importance until all points shall be duly examined and put to the test. But let us quote what Bacon says of this Art of Rhetoric: —

"Rhetoric is subservient to the imagination as Logic is to the understanding; and the duty and office of Rhetoric, if it be deeply looked into, is no other than to apply and recommend the



dictates of reason to the imagination in order to excite the appetite and will. For we see that the *government of reason* is assailed and disordered in three ways, either by the *illaqueation of sophistries*, which pertains to Logic, or by *juggleries of words*, which pertains to Rhetoric, or by *the violence of the passions*, which pertains to Ethics. For as in negotiations with others, men are usually wrought either by cunning or by importunities or by vehemency, so likewise in this negotiation within ourselves we are either undermined by *fallacies of arguments*, or solicited and importuned by *assiduity of impressions* and observations, or agitated and transported by *violence of passions*." De Aug. Book II. ch. vi.

Iago excels in all these branches; he is the most cunning of sophists, exhibits the greatest assiduity in stamping impressions by constant repetition, and is enabled through his knowledge of the human heart to awaken the passions at will.

He realizes the description of the rhetorician as laid down by Aristotle, who speaks of the art as "an off-shoot of logic and of that department of moral philosophy which it is fain to call *the science of life*." Bacon further remarks: "The proofs and demonstrations of logic are the same to all men, but *the proofs and persuasions of rhetoric ought to differ according to the auditors*; like a musician accommodating his skill to different ears, a man should be

"Orpheus in silvis, inter delphinas Arion ;

which *application and variety of speech, in perfection of idea* ought to extend so far that if a man should speak of the same thing to several persons, he should nevertheless use different words to each of them. . . . And therefore it will not be amiss to recommend this of which I now speak to fresh inquiry, and calling it by the name of *The Wisdom of Private Discourse* to set it down among the deficient, being a thing which the more it is considered the more it will be valued." De Aug. Book VI. ch. ii.

Although Bacon places this *Wisdom of Private Discourse* among the deficient, yet it is an art in which Iago is an adept; and had the philosopher wished to present a practical model of his doctrine in "*perfection of idea*," he would have found in Othello's Ancient one to his mind, — for Iago, besides possessing



a perfect command of sophistry, and of the most persuasive and suggestive phrases and words, is able to vary his style with the different persons he addresses, hitting the capacity and tone of each in turn. With Roderigo he is copious, pleonastic, full of repetition, and bears down all opposition by a flood of words; with Othello he is grave, sententious, moral, and argumentative; with Cassio he adopts a friendly, confidential, and advisory manner; with Desdemona he is sympathetic and suggestive of causes for Othello's unkindness. In his soliloquies he drops all his rhetorical artifices, and becomes remarkably terse, pointed, and incisive, — displaying all his malignity of mind in its naked hideousness, and stating, like a brief chorus, what agencies he will use and what misery he will produce.

His discourses with Roderigo, persuading him to this or that course, are specimens of the *deliberative* style, having expediency for its end, and particularly is this the case in the speech in which he persuades him to follow the wars in the hope of gaining the love of Desdemona. His argument has all the main points of a piece of deliberative oratory, delivered in a colloquial manner. Iago avows himself a friend of the hearer ("knit to his deserving with cables of perdurable toughness," of which the hyperbole symbolizes the insincerity of the speaker); his ability to serve him; the strong ground of hope and even the certainty of favorable results from the nature of the circumstances (he all the while touching Roderigo's pride of purse by allusions to the power of money); the inexpediency of drowning himself (which Roderigo had threatened); and, in conclusion, clinches all by a show of joint interest ("let us be conjunctive in our revenge"), which is a voucher for his sincerity. In its copious diction, its repetition of phrases, and its expansion of a thought, it follows strictly the rules laid down by rhetoricians as means of persuasion.

Iago's "praise of women" in answer to the request of Desdemona may be ranked as a *demonstrative* of which the office is to praise or dispraise, and his accusation of Desdemona and proof of her guilt belongs clearly to the *judicial*. The popular opinion is that rhetoric can only be exhibited in harangues to public assemblies, but it is, as Bacon has shown us, equally if not more useful in private discourse; and although Iago puts his brief praise of women in verse, and addresses it to Desdemona alone, it is none the less a specimen of demonstrative rhetoric.

Bacon divides Philosophy into Speculative and Operative, or the Inquisition of Causes and the Production of Effects. The tragedy of *Lear* furnishes an example of Speculative Philosophy or the Inquiry of Causes, such causes being, when human conduct is the subject of inquiry, the *end* or *intention* (final causes) which men entertain; so in *Othello* we have an example of Operative Philosophy, or production of effects by the knowledge of causes, Iago working most marvelous changes in the Moor's nature by his knowledge of the springs of action and his power over words. The aim of true philosophy is beneficial; it seeks to benefit and improve man's estate; but Iago perverts his power and uses his knowledge of causes for the degradation and ruin of the noble and good. And in this way the abuse of rhetoric, with its juggleries of words and the danger lurking in the deductive method of discovering truth, are made glaringly manifest.

At the close of the play, Ludovico, pointing to the dead bodies of Othello, Desdemona, and Æmilia, says to Iago:—

“Look upon the tragic loading of this bed :  
*This is your work. The object poisons sight,*”—

that is, this horrible sight is the work of Iago, the rhetorician, the master of speech and sophistry, who can make mere words stand for facts and reasons.

It is significant that, after his calumnies are exposed, Iago refuses, as if now his occupation were gone, to reply to questions, or to use speech in any manner.

“Demand me nothing : what you know, you know.  
*From this time forth, I never will speak word.*”

From all which it seems that it may be justly conjectured that this play taken as a whole and in all its parts—whatever may have been the intent of the writer—is “a natural story which draws down to the sense,” and exhibits in mimic life and action and with full and copious illustrations Bacon's doctrine of the “Exemplar of Good,” together with the grave errors of judgment into which the mind falls through the influence of sophistical fallacies, the mistakes of the sense, the fallacies of interpretation of words, as well as those inherent imperfections which Bacon terms “false appearances or idols.”

A few words may be added with regard to the composition of the piece.



A novel — and *Othello* is a drama, with the characteristics of a novel — is a fictitious history of a life; and the play takes for its constructive principles the idea that underlies that class of literary works. A History of a Life is described by Bacon as a work “propounding to itself a single person as a subject, in which actions both trifling and important, great and small, public and private, must needs be united and mingled.” In like manner, a novel concentrates the interest on a main personage, who is technically called “the hero,” to whom all the other characters are secondary, however important they may be in and of themselves. The story is a narrative of the circumstances attending the hero’s pursuit of success, — most often in matters of love and marriage. These circumstances are necessarily successive, but such succession is not a mere detail of incidents in the order of time, but is a connected succession, one event growing out of another, and developing a character through some passion or some purpose in its different stages from its first incipency to its full completion. In the play *Othello* in his address to the Senate gives a history of his life from his “boyish days” down to the period of his marriage, and from that point the play puts before us the rise, growth, and culmination of his jealousy; as it does also the gradual execution of Iago’s plans from their first conception to their final accomplishment. The chief interest of a novel, therefore, is derived from its delineation of a character under the pressure of circumstances. “In all men,” says Bacon, “nature is wrought upon by fortune and fortune by nature;” and novels paint in the minutest manner this reciprocal influence of character and circumstance, or to state it more broadly, of the soul and the world of sense. Novels, moreover, draw their plots from domestic and social life, and are pictures of the manners and sentiments of the different classes of society; but a play that aims at being a development of the idea of a novel as a work of art, must, in order to be typical, depict Society in its primary and fundamental principles. It must present those features that are permanent and universal. In the case of *Othello*, therefore, we find the representation laid upon a background of a Christian State and civilization, or a background of law and religion, these being the ultimate standards of opinion and conduct, to which each individual member of society is responsible. Consequently goodness and fidelity to duty are the prime requisites of high character,



exalting and giving its possessor proportionate standing and eminence, and thus creating gradation and classes. Out of these last, in turn, grow envy and jealousy, which ever pursue excellence with detraction. Good and evil therefore, that is, goodness, which is love in action, and envy, which is hate in action, are the two original forces of Society, and in this play are made the basis of the characterization.

In estimating character the true standard is the Exemplar of Good — or what morally is the same thing — the Christian ideal, which combines both goodness and wisdom ; but more often is the standard drawn from usage and public opinion, which frequently uphold and even enjoin a course as manly and honorable which both law and religion condemn. In this respect are essentially differenced the characters of Othello and Desdemona ; the latter following her sense of right and braving public opinion, while the former is led by his worship of that same opinion to murder his wife in defiance of every injunction human and divine against it.

In the estimates of character, however, goodness is taken in its broadest sense, and includes excellence of any kind ; it may be moral, as it appears in Desdemona, who unites nevertheless, with the greatest zeal in doing good no mean ability in her modes of so doing ; to which she alludes in her assurance to Cassio, —

“Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do  
All *my abilities* in thy behalf” —

or it may be intellectual, in which case it is equivalent to skill, ability, sufficiency for the discharge of some office or vocation, as is seen in Othello and Cassio, both of whom, moreover, share largely in moral goodness, with admixture of some defects. It is hardly necessary to say that envy has its perfect example in Iago.

The plot and business of the play is carried forward by the pursuit of “the good,” or of that in the possession of which men judge their happiness to consist. This motive or impulse is inherent in the human heart, and on it rests the very foundations of Society ; for one of its most conspicuous results is love and marriage. This is strongly typified in Othello and Desdemona, who, seeking their happiness in mutual love, override the obstacles that social pride or usage might interpose and thereby violate the true “good.” For Othello, notwithstanding his high honor, abuses the trust and hospitality of Brabantio by clandestinely abducting his

daughter, and Desdemona, although the pattern of goodness, is guilty of gross deception and most unfilial conduct towards her father. These circumstances, attending this union, which otherwise was so profoundly a matter of the soul and so assured of happiness, are in the end a source of misery and ruin.

But the pursuit of "the good" comprises all the ends of human life and every object of human desire; for everything that man strives for is necessarily a "good," real or apparent. Even wickedness is a seeming "good" to the wicked who reap pleasure or profit from it, as we see in Iago, who takes as much pleasure in inflicting misery as the benevolent do in conferring happiness.

The pursuit of "the good" also gives rise to suits, solicitations, intrigues, and the use of influence, all which are obvious features of the play; and besides the more prominent instances, which in fact constitute much of the business of the piece, there are interspersed many solicitations, wishes, requests, and the like, which are *suits* of a minor kind.

The goodness of Desdemona, moreover, coöperates unwittingly with the cunning of Iago to produce the catastrophe; but this is done through the agency of speech, the instrument of Society, through which circumstances in themselves innocent are made terribly potent to test and reveal character; and indeed, with reference to the soul, speech may itself be regarded as circumstance. It is only by external signs that soul can communicate with soul, and, of all circumstances in the outward world, those that most affect and work upon the character are words; but as these are often full of deceit, they enhance vastly the evils that spring from the duplicity of circumstance.

It is clear that the idea of a novel is the formative principle of this drama, which portrays Society in its germs and causes; such idea shapes character, incidents, and business of the plot; and it is equally potent over the dialogue and diction even in the smallest particulars.

It has been pointed out how Christianity colors the sentiments and opinions of the personages of the piece, and how speech is illustrated as the utterance of the soul, and also as the organ with which calumny gilds error and glosses circumstance. It is itself exemplified as circumstance; for instance, from it can be inferred the physical condition of the speaker, as when Desdemona says to Othello, —



"*Your speech is faint ; are you not well ?*"

It is also looked upon as an accomplishment, as follows : —

*Des.* This Ludovico is a proper man.

*Æm.* A very handsome man.

*Des.* *He speaks well.*"

Speech, too, indicates the state of mind without reference to the words, as in this : —

"*I do understand a fury in your words,  
But not the words.*"

Speech expressive of a presentiment regarded as empty words :

*Des.* Good Father ! how foolish are our minds !

If I do die before thee, pr'ythee, shroud me

In one of those same sheets.

*Æm.* Come, come, *you talk.*"

In keeping with this representation of the various uses of speech is the frequent introduction of street cries, alarms, shouts for aid, clamor of midnight brawl ; also signal guns, shots of courtesy, alarm-bells, trumpets announcing some person or event, etc.

Metaphors and figures taken from speech will, of course, be numerous, of which one may be quoted, —

"*O you mortal engines, whose rude throats  
Th' immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,*" etc., —

which gives us the same notion of "imitable thunder" which Bacon speaks of when, contrasting the ancients with the moderns, he awards superiority of knowledge to the latter on the ground, among other reasons, that their "imitable thunder" was in precedence of the ancient "in—imitable thunder : " "*Demens ! qui nimbo et non imitabile fulmen,*" etc. De Aug. Book II. ch. x.

Of the conceptions embraced in the idea of the piece, and which are, as it were, topics under which the vocabulary can be distributed, there are only two that will be touched upon here, viz., *goodness* and *circumstance*.

Two opposite classes of words, affined respectively with *good* and *evil*, *perfect* and *imperfect*, will be found in the play ; as with *perfect*, may be placed *full*, *complete*, *entire*, *solid*, *all*, *all-in-all*, *one*, and the like ; and with *imperfect*, there will go *monstrous*, *disproportionate*, *empty*, *maimed*, *cracked*, and many others ; so with *goodness* will be classed, besides terms indicative of virtue



and excellence, such words as *ability, sufficiency, skill*, and so forth ; and with *evil* will be taken the *vices* and all words expressing *deficiency* and *infirmity* in any respect. With the *good*, moreover, will be placed the objects of pursuit, as *happiness, joy, content, comfort, satisfaction, pleasure, sport, advantage, fruit, profit*, and the like, to which there will be an offset of the opposite class affined with evil ; both of which classes are numerous.

The notion of *circumstance* is that which perhaps gives the most distinctive feature to the style. It is thus defined by Richardson : “ It is applied, *individually*, to anything surrounding or in any manner attending, accompanying, or connected with the main fact ; *collectively*, in the plural, to the whole state, situation, or condition of affairs, as formed, constituted, or composed by various separate particulars ; *the particulars*.”

The latter half of this definition is the only part which will here be exemplified.

*Circumstances* being equivalent to *particulars*, there are many passages which give enumeration of details or are marked by particularity of statement ; as these : —

“ Do but encave yourself,  
And mark the fleers, *the gibes*, and *notable scorns*  
That dwell in *every region of his face* ;  
For I will make him *tell the tale anew*  
*Where, how, how oft, how long ago and when*  
*He hath and is again to meet your wife.*”

Othello’s “farewell” is a beautiful instance of this particularity of statement, as is also his description of the circumstances attending the making of the handkerchief.

Great emphasis as well as pathos is attained in the following passage by the particularity of Desdemona’s protestations : —

“ Here I kneel :  
If e’er my will did trespass ’gainst his love,  
Either in *discourse or thought or actual deed* ;  
Or that *mine eyes, mine ears or any sense*  
Delighted them in any other form ;  
Or that *I do not yet and ever did*  
And *ever will* — though he do shake me off  
To beggarly divorcement — love him dearly,  
Comfort forswear me !”

The foregoing extracts are sufficient to indicate the impress that *circumstance* gives to the style of the play. With respect to

what has been called in these pages, not very accurately, perhaps, the *rhetoric* of the pieces, suffice it to say that in *Othello* there is found the same curious verbal cabinet work, so to speak, as is lavished on all the great plays. These particularities in the composition of the pieces have been somewhat the more dwelt upon for the reason that they are strong proofs of the accuracy with which the idea of a play is assigned, inasmuch as they are the final outgrowth and flowering of such idea. Such details, however, are of but little general interest, and therefore but one more quotation will be made, and that because it furnishes a good example of the poet's power of condensing his matter as well as of his art in form. It is the closing speech of Othello.

When he is assured that he has "fallen in the practice of a cursed slave" and that he stands before the world as a malefactor, Othello's justice as well as his great remorse at once dictates his course; he must die. That opinion, a blind worship of which led him into his disgrace, is still the idol of his soul; and the sense of his past merits seems to him as perhaps having some influence to shield his name from too great obloquy. In his last request, he begs that he may be spoken of exactly as he is, that no gloss may be put upon the circumstances of the case, no bias given to the reports respecting him.

"*Oth.* Soft you : a word or two before you go.  
 I have done the State some service and they know it.  
 No more of that. *I pray you, in your letters,*  
*When you shall these unlucky deeds relate*  
*Speak of me as I am ; nothing extenuate*  
*Nor set down aught in malice.* Then must you speak  
*Of one,* that lov'd not wisely, but too well ;  
*Of one,* not easily jealous, but, being wrought,  
 Perplex'd in the extreme ; *of one,* whose hand  
 Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
 Richer than all his tribe ; *of one,* whose subdu'd eyes  
 Albeit unused to the melting mood  
 Drop tears as fast as Arabian trees  
 Their med'cinable gum. Set you down this,  
 And say besides, that in Aleppo once  
 Where a *malignant* and a turban'd Turk  
 Beat a Venetian and *traduc'd* the State,  
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog  
 And smote him — thus. [*Stabs himself.*  
*Lud.* 'O bloody period."

Nowhere, probably, but in the Shakespearian drama, can there be discovered the same number of beauties compressed in so small a number of lines as are found in this remarkable passage. Othello, the man of honor, whose words always truly express his thoughts and feelings, gives utterance in this his dying speech to all the emotions of his soul. His words reflect his inmost man and are an epitome of his character. They reveal his pride, his candor, his love, his jealousy, his barbaric ignorance, his guilt, his misery, his remorse, his despair; and in the last incident mentioned, they disclose his life of adventure, his creed, and his loyalty to the State. Add thereto their characteristic metaphors and allusions, their poetry, their pathos, and the solemn cadence of the verse. And all this is brought about with consummate ease and skill, and kept in unison with the fundamental conception of the play by being thrown into the form of a request — most natural under the circumstances — that all reports should correspond precisely with the facts, such correspondency being of the essence of truth unperturbed by malice; whilst in the allusion to the occurrence at Aleppo they remind us, in the *malignity* of the Turk who *traduced* the State, of that malevolence acting through calumny that forms the subject-matter of the play. It may be a divine madness that can inspire such poetry and philosophy, but there is a wondrous method in it.



## THE TEMPEST.

THIS comedy, which is a dramatic narrative of the events that befell a ship's company wrecked upon a desert island, can nevertheless be construed as an allegory which shadows forth the fundamental principles of Government, together with the highest results of the Baconian philosophy. Viewed simply as a play, it is the perfection of Shakespearian art, the hidden roots and sources of its vitality being revealed only in the symmetry and beauty of its outgrowth. The plot and characterization are simple and composed of the fewest possible elements; the style is marked by sobriety of thought and brevity of expression, and the whole play, like its own magic, which works its wondrous effects by the most diminutive agencies, exercises its power over the imagination with the greatest economy of means.

The following are its main incidents: Prospero, the duke of Milan, whose state "through all the signiories was for the *liberal arts* without a parallel," being transported and rapt in secret studies, casts the government of his dukedom upon his brother, Antonio, who, seizing the opportunity afforded by Prospero's retirement, confederates with Alonzo, king of Naples, to usurp the sovereignty and depose the lawful duke. The plot is successful: "one midnight fated to the purpose," Prospero and his infant daughter are hurried away from Milan and exposed upon the open sea in a "rotten carcass of a boat," to take their chances of the winds and waves. For twelve years afterward the Neapolitan King and the usurping duke enjoy the fruits of their guilt; Prospero and his claims are forgotten, and no sting of conscience ever reminds his enemies of the violence and fraud they have practiced upon him. But Prospero is providentially drifted to the shore of a "most desolate isle" where, cut off from all human intercourse and sustained only by strength of character and affection for his daughter, he devotes himself to studies that will enable him to reëstablish his fortunes by imparting to him qualities that command success. Though he has lost his coronet,

yet self-discipline and culture exalt him to a supremacy of wisdom and virtue far higher than any that political station can confer. So deep is his lore, so pure his motives, that he acquires over the elements a magical control, and is able to subject to his service the ministering spirits that attend upon the working of the forces of Nature. This mastery over himself and over the physical world qualifies him to be the ruler of men. All that he now needs for the exercise of his powers is Opportunity, and this soon offers. Alonzo and Antonio, with their kinsmen and courtiers, are embarked on a voyage from Tunis, where they had attended the marriage of Claribel, the king's daughter, and are driven so near to Prospero's island as to come within reach of his magic art. His fortunes now depend upon his ability to profit by the occasion. The conditions under which he must act are thus stated by him to his daughter Miranda : —

“ By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune  
(Now my dear lady) hath mine enemies  
Brought to this shore ; and *by my prescience*  
*I find my zenith doth depend upon*  
*A most auspicious star, whose influence*  
*If now I court not but omit, my fortunes*  
*Will ever after droop.”*

Then or never must the blow be struck ; by promptitude and skill must he show that he is master of the occasion. By his sorcery he raises a tempest that wrecks the king's ship, but with “such provision in his art” that the king's company are brought safely to shore at different points and dispersed in troops about the island. Prospero has in view two leading objects, both however pointing to his restoration to power : one, so to subdue and reform the minds of his enemies that they shall yield him his rights through “heart's sorrow” and fears of conscience, the other to inspire the king's son and his daughter Miranda with a mutual affection, by which their happiness will be secured and his issue raised to regal dignity. Both his character and his power seem to leave no room to doubt of his success, yet he lets us know that his projects cannot be accomplished without the severest toil. It is only during the passage of his “auspicious star” that he can effect his purposes. Every minute must have its fitting task, every moment its allotted duty. He thus addresses his attendant spirit, Ariel : —



*Prospero.* What's the time o' th' day?

*Ariel.*

*Past the mid season.*

*Pros.* At least two glasses. *The time 'twixt six and now*

*Must by us both be spent most preciouslly."*

He leaves nothing to chance, but exercises the utmost vigilance over his "industrious servant, Ariel," whom by promises of freedom he prompts to the greatest zeal in the exact performance of every command; and his own time, when not otherwise employed in directing the movements of his plot, he spends in study with regard to it. He says:—

*"I'll to my book,*

*For yet, ere supper time, must I perform*

*Much business appertaining."*

Nor does his solicitude diminish until he is assured that ample success is about to crown all his efforts.

*"Now does my project gather to a head,*

*My charms crack not, my spirits obey; and Time*

*Goes upright with his carriage."*

By these means he regains his dukedom, humiliates and reforms his enemies, affiances his daughter to the crown prince of Naples, in every way shows himself entitled to command, while his moderation and clemency in the hour of triumph are a conclusive proof that self-command is the basis of his power.

From the foregoing outline of Prospero's purposes and his mode of effecting them can be gathered the special significance of this allegorical comedy. Prospero's end was the recovery of his dukedom, for which he desired power as the means of accomplishing this result. In his situation such power could only be found in knowledge, and this was to be obtained by Work and Travail.

And, therefore, "the form" adopted as an artistic idea for this comedy is that of a "History of Travail" or "Voyage of Discovery," which, in the Elizabethan era, was an account of toils and sufferings undergone for the sake of discoveries of new lands that should augment man's knowledge and dominion over nature; and the "form" or essential idea of such a story is *Work* or *Travail* done for the increase of knowledge and power.

In correspondence with this the play portrays a philosopher or magician, who by toil and travail has made discoveries that carry the ordinary knowledge of causes or of means for the supply



of man's wants up to that higher science of "forms," or formal causes, which gives man a mastery of nature's laws.

This, too, is in direct accordance with the usual method of the poet, who always illustrates the Science that grows out of the use of the means for the attainment of the special end depicted in the play: in this instance, that end is power or the knowledge of causes as means of operating any desired effect, and this is procured by work or travail. The original wants of man were supplied by a knowledge of means which constituted a rudimentary art, sufficient for a primitive mode of life, but as wants multiply there is need of increased knowledge, until by toil and study man shall arrive at that science of "forms" or formal causes, which, according to Bacon, is the summit of philosophy and gives man absolute sway over the world around him. This he terms "Magic," and it is represented in the play by the magical control that Prospero holds, by means of "forms," over the king and his companions.

But in order to relieve the sobriety of his theme, the playwright, who always gives full measure and keeps an eye withal to popular feelings and opinions, makes his piece a "Traveller's Story" by distilling into it the spirit of the accounts given by the adventurers of his time of the marvels and prodigies met with by them in the new-found lands beyond the sea, many of which were reputed to be the abodes of devils, fairies, and other supernatural beings. In this way he renders his comedy a dramatic ideal of a "History of Travailes, or Voyage of Discoverie," in which are related troubles encountered, wonders seen, and regions discovered. The value of such a work lies in the minuteness of its particulars and the novelty of the wonders it narrates. The analogy between the "Travail" of the Voyager and that of the philosopher is palpable. They both toil for the gratification of curiosity, the increase of knowledge, and the enlargement of man's dominion by discovery. It is owing to this idea that allusions to plantation, colonization, and traveler's tales are introduced into the piece. There may even be found in it hits at the mismanagement of the affairs of "The Virginia Company."

The allegorical import of the play, however, becomes more manifest by comparing its incidents and general tenor with certain doctrines of Bacon on the subject of man's restoration to power over creation. It was a fundamental tenet with Bacon that

man should by labor recover that control of nature which he had lost through the fall. By work, every moment should be improved for Profit and Advancement, and the wisest possible use be made of Time.

The momentous nature of this use becomes more apparent when we reflect upon the conditions under which man holds his existence in this world of want and pain, — conditions so hard that their alleviation Bacon over and over again declares to be the true end of human knowledge. In one of his earliest works entitled “Of the Interpretation of Nature,” speaking of the uses of knowledge, he has these words: “Yet evermore it must be remembered that the least part of knowledge passed to man must be subject to that use for which God hath granted it; which is the *benefit and relief of the state and society of man*. . . . And therefore it is not the pleasure of curiosity, nor the quiet of resolution, nor the raising of the spirit, nor victory of wit, nor faculty of speech, nor lucre of profession, nor ambition of honor or fame, nor inablement for business that are the true ends of knowledge, but it is a *restitution and reinvesting* (in great part) of man to the *sovereignty and power* which he had in his *first state of creation*.” Vol. VI. p. 34.

And in the *Novum Organum*, which is also entitled “Aphorisms concerning *The Kingdom of Man*,” he speaks (Book I. Aph. 129) of *new discoveries as new creations* and imitations of God’s works, as well sang the poet: —

“To man’s frail race great Athens long ago  
First gave the seed whence waving harvests grow,  
And re-created all our life below.”

And in Aph. 52, Book II. he says: “For man by the fall fell at the same time from his *state of innocency* and from his *dominion over creation*. Both of these losses however can even in this life be in some part repaired: *the former by religion and faith; the latter by arts and sciences*. For creation was not by the curse made altogether and forever a rebel, but in virtue of that charter ‘*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*’ it is now by *various labours at length and in some measure subdued to the supplying of man with bread*; that is, to the *uses of human life*.”

The foregoing doctrines are incorporated into this play and furnish its dominant conceptions. Prospero’s method of regaining



his lost dukedom by a knowledge that reaches a magical command over the powers of Nature is obviously analogous with the restitution of man to his sovereignty over creation by science, the highest practical form of which is in Bacon's system denominated "Magic." But this great achievement of restoring "The Kingdom of Man" depends upon *labor*, — "labour as well in *inventing* as in *executing*; yet nevertheless chiefly that labour and travel," says Bacon, "which is described by the sweat of the brows more than of the body; that is such travel as is joined with the working and discursion of the spirits in the brain" (Vol. VI. p. 35); or, in other words, labor intellectual and scientific involving the due employment of time. For man is a creature of time; his life being literally but a moment, inasmuch as he lives only in the present, which is an ever-advancing point between the receding past and the approaching future, and Time, like the thread of the hour-glass, though continuous to the sense, is a series of minute and individual particles. But this series has no existence nor reality save as the ground of order and priority in nature, nor could we have either perception or measure of duration but for the regular and periodical recurrence of certain phenomena in the external world. In the economy of nature everything is "performed to point." Sun, moon, tides, night, day, the seasons are punctual to their appointed hours. There should be the same exactitude in the moral world. To the wise man every moment is Opportunity, and to do and say the right thing at the right time — the exact *punctum temporis* — is the maximum of wisdom. To effect this requires a perfect prescience, the attribute of Divine Providence alone, in whose government of the world every particular is prearranged and every event falls out precisely at the appointed time. Yet this prescience or prudence is shared by man in proportion to his knowledge of the order of nature, and such knowledge is the fruit of labor. By toil and travail alone can he discover those principles which govern the succession of events in the material and moral worlds, and the knowledge of which confers foresight, prophecy, and power.

This scheme, thus generally stated, is apparently the basis of the play, but in order that it may be more clearly traced in the structure of the piece, it may be touched upon in some of its particulars.

The objects of Labor are material prosperity and the acquisi-



tion of knowledge, and the use of Time is but a phrase signifying the use which Man makes of the world without and within him. Through his physical conditions man stands in as close proximity to nature as the tree that is rooted to the earth. He can neither see nor hear nor speak nor exist without the use of the elements. The first and indispensable knowledge he must acquire concerns his bodily life, his food, raiment, shelter, and all that conduces to his physical comfort and safety. From his birth he is employed in gaining an acquaintance with the world that is to be his home, and long before the period of conscious reflection arrives, he has stored his mind with a great and varied knowledge of the uses and qualities of things, of times, and seasons, and of the action and influence of the elements. These primary and common acquisitions, without which life would not be worth a moment's purchase, might perhaps suffice for the supply of his necessities, were he a mere eating, drinking, and sleeping animal (and the king and his company, particularly the Stephano group, are but little more), but being endowed with reason and a desire for progress, he carries within him the seeds of societies, laws, and civilization, as represented by Prospero and his intellectual sovereignty over nature. Not content with crude observation or casual experience, he subjects all things to his analysis, resolves them into their first principles, learns their properties, and by the study of dispersed and isolated phenomena, discovers the general laws which control the order and procession of nature. By these means he builds up the Arts and Sciences, in one word, Philosophy, by which he incalculably enlarges his knowledge of the uses of things, regains his dominion over nature to an astonishing degree, and compels the elemental forces which would prove his swift destruction were he unacquainted with their modes of action, to become the prompt and untiring slaves of his will. Thus philosophy, which explores the economy of the world and seeks by analysis of bodies into their elementary natures to learn their uses and qualities, is but a higher kind of experience, which has its germ in the familiar knowledge of those common things that supply man's physical wants and necessities; and in its application to human affairs, its obvious advantage lies in multiplying man's aids and comforts, and in furnishing precepts for all the emergencies and occasions of life.

But it is not merely by the subjection of the forces of nature to

economic uses that Philosophy is serviceable to man: it has a higher and nobler use in the exaltation and refinement of his Humanity; for Culture liberalizes the mind, softens the manners, refines the feelings, inspires courage and patience under adverse fortune, and converts barbarism to civilization. Culture, therefore, is productive of charity and mutual assistance, and teaches that the knowledge which confers power is worse than useless unless applied to the aid and service of man. All true power is beneficent in its action, and is exercised in creation and reformation, not in destruction. It is ever ready to pardon penitent guilt. The Mightiest Power is the Author of all things, and his tender mercies are over all his works; and the power of the philosopher then shows likest God's when it is exercised in alleviating the miseries and promoting the welfare of mankind. Obviously the relation that Man holds to a period or point of Time, regarded as Opportunity, is equivalent to that which he bears to the order of nature and of the world without him, to which he must conform his conduct to ensure his well-being.

The knowledge which enables him to do this goes by the homely name of Prudence, which is the practical application of the lessons of experience to human affairs and the prime virtue in a world of utility. Prudence enjoins not only the use, but the fit use of Time. It is that *ἐνραξία* or *modestia* of the Stoics which is defined as "the science of the fitness of time for acting and speaking." "*Eadem est prudentiæ definitio*," says Cicero. It is the science of details and particulars; it looks at every plan in all its parts, and points out that the minutest part, whether in matters of the household or of the State, is precious as necessary to the good order and harmony of the whole. It is the soul of economy and husbandry; it distributes affairs and times and prescribes method and progress according to principle, and is therefore the virtue of the business man; and in its higher manifestations, it rises into that Wisdom which, according to Bacon's maxim, is Power and the true title to sovereignty. But this practical virtue is bounded by the limitations of man's knowledge. Were the laws which regulate the winds and waves as well understood as are those which govern the courses of the stars, the prudent mariner might embark with as little risk of wreck as he now incurs of missing his destined port. But beyond the scope of Man's imperfect vision, there lies a vast realm of Chance or Contingency, pre-



sided over by that Power, whether called Destiny or Fate or Providence, —

“That hath to instrument this lower world  
And what is in it,” —

and is ruler of the chances of the hour. To this Power — and in this dramatic allegory, some of the most familiar tenets of modern theology are invested with a classic costume — are owing those seemingly fortuitous concurrences, which afford occasions for securing some advantage and give to the passing moments their special value. If such moments are used with a wise foresight of their whole drift and bearing, the might of nature coöperates with the endeavors of man and the event is prosperous; if neglected through improvidence or perverted to unjust ends, they lead to loss and misery. This Power, therefore, which sows the seeds of retributive justice, of rewards and punishments, advantage and loss, in the use and misuse of every moment, forms the moral background of the play.

So far then as man's knowledge extends is he mercifully allowed to share in the power with which the world is ruled, and this faculty finds its legitimate exercise in relieving the wants and miseries of men. This it does by teaching useful arts and wise rules of life, and above all, by instituting good government, which rewards industry, punishes guilt, reforms the penitent, and maintains order and security by repressing and chastising the criminal and vicious; more particularly when these attempt to usurp authority for the indulgence of bad passions or the gratification of sensual appetite. The possession of such power and its uses are instanced in Prospero.

To exemplify the foregoing tenets, this comedy places man in as direct juxtaposition to the elements of earth, air, fire, and water as is possible in dramatic representation. The company stranded on the desolate isle have no artificial barriers between them and those forces of nature, which are such excellent servants but such tyrannical masters.

All the elements are indispensable to man's existence, but the air, without which his bodily life could be sustained but a few moments, is preëminently so, it being the great agent of his progress and knowledge, for the air is the vehicle of sound, and all the sounds of nature from the chirp of the insect to the reverberations of the thunder, have significance for the ear of man;



but those which are the most potent over his mind and feelings are the minute articulate ones, which constitute the elements of speech, whereby knowledge is communicated, humanity advanced, and civilization made possible. These are the spells that are truly magical and prove the potency of little things to work marvelous effects.

The primary step in culture is *language*, and this, in turn, is the means of instruction. Neither thought nor purpose can be made known except by taking form in words; as is emphasized in the teachings Prospero gives Caliban.

"I pitied thee,  
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour  
One thing or other : when thou didst not, savage,  
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble, like  
A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes  
With words that made them known."

Act I. Sc. 2.

The central figure of the piece is Prospero. Under the guise of a wise and benevolent magician, he is a type of the highest culture. His knowledge of nature extends to a control of the elements, and his enlarged humanity embraces in its benevolence even his worst enemies. He is a magnificent ideal of the philosopher, who wields the powers of the highest science for the benefit of mankind. His magic is a poetic realization of that power sought by Bacon in the study of "forms" or primary laws of nature, and to which that great philosopher gave the name of "*magic, or natural prudence*."<sup>1</sup> Commanding by his art the invisible agents that preside over the qualities and properties of things, Prospero has full control over the physical conditions of those around him, paralyzing their powers of action with a wave of his wand, or causing them to sleep or wake at his pleasure. He acts the part of a subordinate Providence in whose hands the forces of nature are instruments for the punishment of guilt. His enemies, who had exposed him and his child to destruction by the elements, he dismays with shapes and sounds so terrifying to

<sup>1</sup> There be two parts of Natural Philosophy — the inquisition of causes and the production of effects, speculative and operative, *natural science* and *natural prudence*. And here I will make a request that, for the latter, I may revive and reintegrate the misapplied and abused name of *natural magic*, which in its true sense is but *natural wisdom* or *natural prudence*, taken according to the ancient acceptation, purged from vanity and superstition." *Advancement of Learning*, p. 214.

their consciences and so contrary to the order of nature that they are driven mad with amazement and fear.

Prospero has no vindictive aims ; humane as mighty he chastises his enemies only to reform them.

“ They being penitent,  
The sole drift of his purpose doth extend  
Not a frown further.”

And he restores them to their senses by the same elemental agency — the power of sound — by which he had deprived them of reason.

“ A solemn air and the best comforter  
To an unsettled fancy cure thy brains  
Now useless, boil'd within thy skull.”

Even after the charm is removed their perplexity continues, and they stand powerless before the superior knowledge of the magician. Alonzo says : —

“ This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod ;  
And there is in this business more than Nature  
Was ever conduct of. Some oracle  
Must rectify our knowledgè.”

Majestic and dramatically effective as is Prospero as a powerful and beneficent magician, he also fills the more prosaic rôle of “ the business man.” He is a complete example of that “ wisdom of business,” or “ advancement in life,” which forms one branch of Bacon's “ Civil Knowledge.” For with the usual contrast between the form and the spirit of a Shakespearian play *The Tempest* enfolds in the story of a few individuals cast away on a desert shore a doctrine of Civil Prudence or Knowledge, a branch of Philosophy, which Bacon divides into the Arts of Conversation, of Negotiation, and of Government, which last includes *Æconomics*, as a State includes a family. De Aug. Book VIII. ch. iii.

This kind of knowledge, as Bacon points out, is exceedingly difficult to reduce to precept inasmuch as it appertains to all the variety of occasions of life. And in fact, the wisdom touching Negotiation or business he reports as deficient as never having been collected into writing. “ There be no books of it,” he says, “ except some few scattered advertisements, that have no proportion to the magnitude of the subject.” Among the many axioms which he lays down, he dwells particularly upon the necessity of

keeping order and priority both in matter and time. In *The Advancement*, speaking on this subject of prudential wisdom and the use of occasions, he says: "As there is an order and priority in matter, so is there in time, the preposterous placing whereof is one of the commonest errors, while men fly to their ends when they should intend their beginnings, and do not take things in order of time as they should come on, but marshal them according to greatness, and not according to instance; not observing the good precept, *Quod nunc instat agamus*,"<sup>1</sup> — a precept which obviously enjoins the fit use of time, and which, both in its observance and violation, is so fully presented in *The Tempest*, that had the play been written expressly and avowedly for an example, it could not better serve that purpose than it now does.

And again, in his *Essay on Dispatch*, he says: "Order and distribution and the singling out of parts is the life of dispatch."

In all these respects Prospero's method is perfect. He promptly seizes the occasion which offers for the restoration of his fortunes, and in all his plans is governed by a wise foresight. He comprehends his project as a whole and in all its parts, appoints every particular to time and place, exacts the strictest punctuality in the performance of every command, and carefully supervises each step in the progress of his scheme. Orderly and vigilant, he hurries nothing, omits nothing, but advances deliberately, gradually, and surely to the accomplishment of his purpose. His preëminent prudence is marked by his knowledge of opportunity and of the fitness of time for action and speech. Thus he waits for the precise moment to arrive before disclosing to Miranda the story of his life.

<p>"<i>Miranda.</i>          Begun to tell me what I am, but stopp'd          And left me to a bootless inquisition,          Concluding, '<i>Stay, not yet.</i>'  <i>Prospero.</i></p>	<p>You have often          The hour's now come :          The very minute bids thee ope thine ear :          Obey and be attentive."</p>
---	--

And observe the test he makes of her memory in order to gain the precise starting-point for his story, and his further carefulness to waste no time, which is marked by repeated calls upon her attention, "Dost thou attend me? dost thou hear?" etc. These

<sup>1</sup> Dispatch we now what stands as now upon.



breaks render the long story more natural and animated, stamp it with character, and shoot through the recital a thread of the organic idea.

A like fitness of time both for speech and silence is observed by Prospero in what he says and in what he omits saying, when endeavoring to assure the disenchanted king of the reality of what is before him.

*Alonzo.* If thou beest Prospero,  
Give us particulars of thy preservation,  
How thou hast met us here, whom three hours since  
Were wreck'd upon this shore, where I have lost  
(How sharp the point of this remembrance is !)  
My dear son Ferdinand.  
*Prospero.* Howsoe'er you have  
Been jostled from your senses, know for certain  
That I am Prospero, and that very duke  
Who was thrust forth of Milan.  
*No more yet of this ;*  
For 't is a chronicle of day by day,  
Not a relation for a breakfast, nor  
Befitting this first meeting."

In the following speech of Prospero's there is marked the habitual order of his mind, while the flow and sequence of the thought is imitative and descriptive of progress and advancement.

*Pros.* Sir, I invite your highness and your train  
To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest  
For this one night ; which, part of it, I'll waste  
With such discourse, as, I not doubt, shall make it  
Go quick away : the story of my life  
And the particular accidents gone by  
Since I came to this isle : and in the morn  
I'll bring you to your ship ; and so to Naples ;  
Where I have hope to see the nuptials  
Of our dear-belov'd solemnized,  
And thence retire me to my Milan, where  
Every third thought shall be my grave."

Fitness of time for speech and action is no less a rule of propriety and decorum than it is of prudence, and appertains as well to "wisdom of behaviour" as to "wisdom of business." At the opening of Act II. the king and his companions are introduced and their respective characters placed before us in the fitness or unfitness, the opportuneness or impertinency of their speech. This scene affords a pointed illustration of that branch

of Civil Knowledge which is termed *Conversation*, the end of which, according to Bacon, is to provide *comfort against solitude*. But solitude here is not restricted to mere solitariness or absence of company, but has a wider meaning, and applies to that solitude of spirit which men experience in grief and sorrow, and which leads them to brood in silence over their own feelings. This is a solitude that is especially comforted by words of hope and friendly cheer, such as Gonzalo attempts to console Alonzo with, who mourns for the supposed loss of his son. Gonzalo, who is wise and humane, suggests to Alonzo that source of comfort which to the mass of men is, perhaps, more consolatory than any other, that is, that others are equally afflicted with themselves and from similar causes; and this, too, coincides with a remark of Bacon in a letter to Bishop Andrews: "Amongst consolations, it is not the least to represent to a man's self *like examples of calamity in others*." And thus Gonzalo says to the king:—

"Our hint of woe  
Is common: every day some sailor's wife,  
The masters of some merchant and the merchant  
Have just our theme of woe."

He points out also — what is always a source of gratification — the advantage they have over others:—

"But for the miracle,  
I mean our preservation, few in millions  
Can speak like us: then wisely, good sir, weigh  
Our sorrow with our comfort."

Gonzalo's persistent attempts to console the king expose him to the charge of unseasonable loquacity, and therein of a violation of the wisdom of behavior. To divert the mind of the monarch he calls his attention to the singular fact, so contrary to the order of nature, that their garments, notwithstanding they had been drenched in the sea, were nevertheless restored to their first freshness, and then adroitly connects this circumstance with the marriage of the king's daughter, Claribel,—an allusion which he supposes must be agreeable to the feelings of the monarch. But Alonzo is a king only in name; he cherishes a willful despondency, and refuses to be comforted. He exclaims:—

"You cram these words into mine ears against  
The stomach of my sense: Would I had never  
Married my daughter there! for coming thence,

My son is lost, and in my rate, she too  
 Who is so far from Italy remov'd  
 I ne'er again shall see her. O thou mine heir  
 Of Naples and of Milan, what strange fish  
 Hath made his meal on thee ? ”

The levity and heartlessness of Antonio and Sebastian and their coarseness, both of mind and feeling, are apparent in their frivolous jeering at Gonzalo's kind-hearted attempts to comfort the king. They utter not a word that befits the occasion. Throughout the dialogue they speak out of time, interrupting the others with parenthetical and irrelevant comments, or taking the words out of the mouths of the speakers and finishing their sentences with some ridiculous conclusion of their own. With the bereaved monarch they have not the slightest sympathy. “He receives *comfort*,” they say, “like *cold porridge*.” A part of the scene may be quoted to show the *unwisdom* of their behavior.

“*Seb.* Look, he's winding up the watch of his wit ; by and by it will strike.

*Gon.* Sir —

*Seb.* One : tell.

*Gon.* When every grief is entertained that's offered,  
 Comes to the entertainer —

*Seb.* A dollar.

*Gon.* Dolour comes to him, indeed : you have spoken truer than you purposed.

*Seb.* You have taken it wiselier than I meant you should.

*Gon.* Therefore, my lord, —

*Ant.* Fie, what a spendthrift is he of his tongue !

*Alon.* I pr'ythee, spare.

*Gon.* Well, I have done : but yet —

*Seb.* He will be talking.

*Ant.* Which, of he or Adrian, for a good wager, first begins to crow ?

*Seb.* The old cock.

*Ant.* The cockerel.

*Seb.* Done. The wager ?

*Ant.* A laughter.

*Seb.* A match !

*Adr.* Though this island seem to be desert, —

*Ant.* Ha, ha, ha !

*Seb.* So, you're paid.

*Adr.* Uninhabitable and almost inaccessible, —

*Seb.* Yet, —

*Adr.* Yet, —



*Ant.* He could not miss 't.

*Adr.* It must needs be of subtle, tender and delicate temperance.

*Ant.* Temperance was a delicate wench.

*Seb.* Ay, and a subtle; as he most learnedly deliver'd," etc.

This frivolous conversation, so unfitted to time, place, and person, is continued at some length. The utter absence of all fraternal feeling in Sebastian is particularly expressed in the ungenerous and most unseasonable speech he makes to Alonzo:—

"We have lost your son,  
I fear, forever: Milan and Naples have  
*More widows* in them of this *business making*  
Than we *bring men to comfort them: the fault's*  
*Your own.*

*Alonzo.* So is the dear'st of the loss.

*Gonzalo.* My lord Sebastian,  
The truth you speak doth lack some *gentleness*  
And *time to speak it in: you rub the sore*  
When you should *bring the plaster.*

*Seb.* Very well.

*Ant.* And most *chirurgically.*"

Francisco is a character who has but one speech given to him, and that one of a few lines only. Though so short, it indicates the speaker's character, for it is eminently timely and consolatory. Being a story, moreover, of a strong swimmer struggling for life and coming safely to shore, it is not without significance as an instance of the best possible employment of time and of difficulties stoutly overcome.

The conspiracy, which Antonio and Sebastian form against the life of the king, is an example of the truth that Opportunity is suggestive of good or evil according to the characters of those to whom it presents itself. The villainy which lurks under the flippancy and indolence of Antonio and Sebastian is brought to the surface at once through the influence of opportunity. The deep sleep that Prospero, by the agency of Ariel, causes to fall upon the king and Gonzalo suggests to the mind of Antonio their instant murder. Yet this very readiness to seize an opportunity proves how little he has of true prudence or sense of the fitness of time, for even supposing the plot successful, neither he nor Sebastian can enjoy the fruits of their guilt, as there seems no possible means of escaping from the island. This is an instance of that "preposterous placing of time" which Bacon sets down as one of

the commonest errors. All the incitements with which Antonio prompts to the murder of the king the more inert, though not less villainous, Sebastian are drawn from the fitness of the occasion. He points to the drowning of the king's son, Ferdinand; the distance (as measured in *time*) of Naples from Tunis, and the consequent inability of Claribel, the heiress of the throne, to maintain her rights, and especially to the fact that Alonzo was then lying buried in sleep as offering an instant opportunity of securing the crown. The scene is too long to quote, but it is an admirable example of the skill with which the dramatist, while painting the moral portrait of these villains, yet couches the dialogue in diction and metaphor that quicken every phrase with the organic idea.

In these two sneering heartless nobles, there is exhibited a predominance of the devilish element in civilized man, whereas the animal side of his nature finds an equally marked representation in the drunken Stephano. Reckless and improvident, Stephano lives only for the present moment and the immediate gratification of his appetite. "Tell not me," he says, "when the butt is out, we will drink water; not a drop before." With his head fuddled with wine, he vapors and he bullies, but he can neither plan nor execute any fixed purpose. Such a matter as the murder of a powerful magician he undertakes without one thought of its feasibility, and is diverted from his project by the first trifle that catches his eye. He is not without a strong dash of humor and drunken good-fellowship, but his benevolence has an eye to his own advantage. On his first entrance, he virtually admits that his life is governed by no self-command nor sense of the fitness of the occasion. Having just escaped drowning, he reels in, bottle in hand, and singing a sailor's ditty.

"I shall no more to sea, to sea,  
Here shall I die ashore.

*This is a scurvy tune to sing at a man's funeral. Well, here's my comfort.*" —  
[Drinks.

In Stephano's opinion, his bottle (or that which ministers to appetite) comprises the whole body of law, philosophy, and divinity. It is his sure source of courage and comfort under all the sorrows of life. He thinks it equally good for bodily ailments. Finding the trembling Caliban on the ground, and supposing that he is suffering from an ague, he at once proceeds to "recover" him by administering a potion of his panacea, at the same time

intimating that it is no bad preceptor of language, — in which he contrasts with Prospero.

“*Caliban.* The spirit torments me : O !

*Stephano.* This is some monster of the isle with four legs, who hath got, as I take it, an ague. Where the devil should he *learn our language* ? I will give him *some relief*, if it be but for that. If I can *recover* him and keep him tame and get to Naples with him, he’s a present for any emperor that ever trod on neat’s-leather.

*Cal.* Do not torment me ; pr’ythee ; I’ll bring my wood home faster.

*Ste.* He is in *his fit now* and does not talk after the wisest. He shall taste of my bottle : if he *have never drunk wine afore*, it will go near to remove his fit. If I can *recover him* and keep him tame, I will not take too much for him ; he shall pay for him that hath him, and that soundly.

*Cal.* Thou dost me yet but little hurt ; thou wilt anon, I know it by thy trembling : now Prospero works on thee.

*Ste.* Come on your ways : *open your mouth* ; here is that which will give language to you, cat. *Open your mouth* : this will shake your shaking, I can tell you, and that soundly : you cannot tell *who is your friend* : *open your chaps again*,” etc., etc.

As Stephano’s bottle contains his code of faith he humorously uses it to administer oaths.

“*Ste.* How didst thou escape ? How cam’st thou hither ? *swear by this bottle* how thou cam’st hither. I escaped upon a butt of sack, which the sailors heaved overboard, by this bottle ! which I made of the bark of a tree with mine own hands since I was cast ashore.

*Cal.* I’ll *swear upon that bottle* to be thy true subject. For the liquor is not earthly.

*Ste.* Here, *kiss the book*.

*Cal.* Hast thou not dropp’d out of heaven ?

*Ste.* Out of the moon, I do assure thee : I am the man in the moon when time was.

*Cal.* I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee :

My mistress shew’d me thee and thy dog and thy bush.

*Ste.* Come, *swear to that* ; *kiss the book*.

*Cal.* I’ll show thee every fertile inch of the island ;  
And I will kiss thy foot : I pr’ythee, *be my god*.”

These last words contain a thought which Bacon has also expressed (Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 129) : “Let a man consider what a difference there is between the life of man in the most cultured province of Europe and in the wildest and most barbarous district of New India, he will feel it to be great enough to justify the saying that ‘*man is a god to man*.’”



Caliban is the savage man, ignorant, indolent, malignant. He represents man at the lowest ebb of knowledge, and is idealized as far below ordinary humanity as Prospero the philosopher, the lord of nature, is above it. He seems more like some grotesque animal than a man. Prospero humanely attempts to civilize this savage, but he can do no more than endow him with language. He teaches him how

“To name the bigger light, and how the less,  
That burn by day and night ;”

but the chief use and profit Caliban derives from speech is to curse his preceptor.

“*You taught me language ; and my profit on ’t  
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you  
For learning me your language.*”

Caliban lives in a twilight of intellect, the higher faculties of the soul having hardly room to expand, they are so shut in and smothered by his dark earthy nature. He exhibits understanding — as the brute does — and there is in him a spark of reason, but it is wholly undeveloped.

Caliban’s dialect is poetical, but it is because his thoughts are all sensuous and lie close to the imagery of Nature, which is always picturesque. The poetry is in the reader, not in him. He has no fancy, no assimilative power, and but little perception of relations. His thoughts dwell with the concrete. Witness his suit to Stephano : —

“I pr’ythee, let me bring thee where crabs grow ;  
And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts ;  
Shew thee a jay’s nest, and instruct thee how  
To snare the nimble marmoset ; I ’ll bring thee  
To clust’ring filberds, and sometimes I ’ll get thee  
Young sea-mells from the rock : Wilt thou go with me ?”

This is suggestive to the imagination of the reader, but it is matter of fact to Caliban. It is as if some ape or wild animal should offer to befriend one with his knowledge of wood-craft.

Prospero, who may be supposed to understand Caliban, thus describes him : —

“A devil, a born devil, on whose nature  
Nurture can never stick ; on whom my pains,  
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost ;

And as with age his body uglier grows,  
So his mind cankers."

But let the "servant-monster" have justice; he is not all animal, nor all devil. In this rudimentary man there are discernible undeveloped powers; a germ of loyalty and reverence and a glimmering sense of beauty. He is alive, moreover, to the power of sound, and has dreams that make him weep, — dreams of unattainable happiness, blind stirrings of the soul, that prove that there is in him a better nature, and that he is to some extent an upward-looking creature. He says to Stephano: —

"Be not afraid; the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices  
That, if I then had wak'd after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,  
The clouds methought would open and shew riches  
Ready to drop upon me, that, when I wak'd,  
I cry'd to dream again."

Ignorant and wicked as Caliban is, he is neither so vulgar nor so corrupt as the more civilized Stephano. He is, moreover, earnest in his purposes and cunning enough to know the value of opportunity. There is even something of moral disgust in the feeling with which he views the folly of Stephano, who turns away from the all-important business of securing the sovereignty of the isle by the murder of the "tyrant," for the purpose of possessing himself of the glittering apparel of ducal rank, — a folly not unparalleled in the career of many popular leaders.

"What do you mean  
To doat thus on such luggage? Let it alone  
And do the murder first. . . .  
Ste. Be you quiet, monster.  
Cal. We shall lose our time,  
And all be turn'd to barnacles, or to apes  
With foreheads villainous low."

Nor is Caliban's brain so crass and heavy, his reason so be-  
dimmed, that he is not sensible of his own folly and able to rate  
Stephano at his true worth when once his eyes are opened.

"I'll be wise hereafter,  
And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass  
Was I to take this drunkard for a god  
And worship this dull fool!"

The true end of knowledge, as Bacon never tires of teaching, is its application to the use and benefit of man; and the fairest offspring of Philosophy is a perfect Humanity; a Pity that is awakened by every form of distress. In the very front and preface of his work Bacon puts this solemn prayer: —

“I most humbly and fervently pray to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, that, remembering *the sorrows of mankind and the pilgrimage of this our life*, wherein we wear out days few and evil, they will vouchsafe through my hands to endow the human family with new mercies.”

The ideal figure of the philosopher in “Solomon’s home” “had an aspect as if he pitied men,” — and again in the *Redargutio* the same thing is repeated.<sup>1</sup>

This pity, charity, mercy — the offspring of Philosophy — is represented by Prospero’s daughter, Miranda. Her culture is particularly noted. Prospero says: —

“Here in this island we arrived; and here  
Have I, thy school-master, made thee more profit  
Than other princes can, that have more time  
For vainer hours and tutors not so careful.”

Act I. Sc. 2.

Unsullied purity of mind and tenderest compassion form this exquisite creation. She is pity’s self. Her heart overflows with commiseration, her eyes brim with tears at every sight of suffering, at every tale of woe. The direful spectacle of the wreck touches “the very virtue of compassion in her.” She says: —

“Oh, I have suffered  
With those I saw suffer: a brave vessel  
Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her,  
Dash’d all to pieces. Oh! the cry did knock  
Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish’d.  
Had I been any god of power, I would  
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e’er  
It should the good ship so have swallow’d, and  
The fraughting souls within her.”

Act I. Sc. 2.

Miranda’s every thought is innocent and pure, unmixed with baser matter. There is no stain of earth upon her. She is the rare consummate flower of the highest culture, impossible to be

<sup>1</sup> “Aspectus admodum placidi et sereni; nisi quod oris compositio erat tanquam miserantis.” Vol. VII. p. 59.



found, no doubt, on this earth, but blooming in matchless beauty in the ideal world of Shakespeare. It is the union of this supreme moral excellence with industry, honor, self-restraint, and law in the person of the legitimate prince which forms the task that Philosophy taxes its powers to perform. The prince, too, must prove himself worthy of Miranda. He is, therefore, subjected to the severest labor in menial task-work ; but Ferdinand recognizes the intrinsic dignity of labor. He exalts his mean employment by the worth of his purpose. He sees that toil has, beyond its immediate end, a higher and nobler reward ; that

“Some kinds of baseness  
Are nobly undergone, and that most poor matters  
Point to rich ends.”

It is to gain the highest moral excellence that he becomes “a patient log-man,” though, were it not for the mistress that “makes his labours pleasures,” he would

“No more endure  
This wooden slavery than to suffer  
The flesh-fly blow his mouth.”

Miranda thus becomes to him both Prospero's gift and “his acquisition worthily purchas'd.”

The masque (a device of Prospero's, which proves that he, like the writer of *The Tempest* itself, is both poet and philosopher) that is presented before Ferdinand and Miranda after their betrothment, may be supposed emblematic of the prosperity of the State which must follow upon so perfect a government. Juno promises increase of population and Ceres agricultural plenty, whilst the dance of the nymphs and the reapers indicates the happiness of the people.

Scenes which exhibit a practical application of the rules of “Conversation” and of “Negotiation” have been pointed out ; the play treats, moreover, of the fundamental principles on which rests the Art of Government, which art is the third division that Bacon makes of Civil Prudence, but with regard to this he prescribes silence to himself, and therefore it is not possible to say whether there are any parts of the play which would coincide with such particular precepts as he would have laid down on that subject ; but it is clear that the play very fully exemplifies the Baconian doctrine that “Knowledge is Power ;” that there is no true

sovereignty but of intellect and virtue, and that he only is king and entitled to leadership whose wisdom and skill can carry the State or the individual through whatever storms or disasters may happen. The opening scene puts forward this, the reigning idea of the play, with much force and significance. The king's ship is laboring in the storm, and the master and crew are straining every nerve to rescue the vessel from destruction. The safety and lives of all depend upon action, courage, and seamanship. Meantime the royal party stand idly and helplessly by, interfering with the sailors by their presence and troubling the busy boatswain with useless and unseasonable questions. But how little respect does king or duke or learned counselor receive at the hands of the impatient mariner! Here, where death is staring them in the face, all political and factitious distinctions vanish, and he only is king whose skill and knowledge can cope with the storm and save the ship from wreck.

"*Alon.* Good boatswain, *have care.* Where 's the Master? Play the men.

*Boats.* I pray now, keep below.

*Ant.* Where 's the Master, Boson?

*Boats.* Do you not hear him? You *mar our labour.* Keep your cabins : you do assist the storm.

*Gonz.* Nay, good, be patient.

*Boats.* When the sea is. Hence! What care these roarers for the name of king? To cabin ; silence ! trouble us not.

*Gonz.* Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

*Boats.* None that I more love than myself. You are a counsellor : if you can command the elements to silence and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more. Use your authority : if you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so hap. Cheerly, good hearts ! Out of our way, I say !"

Clearly, statecraft is of but little avail in this emergency, and the true king here is he who is the best seaman.

The Shakespearian drama is filled with contrasts ; its method necessitates it, and in this play one of the most obvious is that between Prospero, the philosopher, benevolent in heart and wise in intellect, the true king of men, and Caliban, the child of ignorance and vice, almost incapable of culture, representing the lowest and vilest of *the plebs*. Under a fantastic and uncouth form, in keeping with the wild wonders of this fairy-tale, Caliban reveals mental and moral features that make him a type of the



lowest order of the State. He is the ideal radical, the normal democrat, — by no means the cultivated gentleman who finds in metaphysical speculations and a belief in the perfectibility of man his democratic faith, and whose opinions are rather a sentiment, a large and liberal hope for the future of the race than sound convictions from the practical and prosaic lessons of history and experience, nor the honest and intelligent artisan or yeoman, whose skill and labor are the true wealth and strength of a nation, — but the ignorant and envious hewer of wood and drawer of water, who cherishes no feeling towards that superiority of intelligence and character by whose humane instructions he is benefited, but rancor, envy, hate, and fear. This class existed in England in the days of Shakespeare, with features far more strong and repulsive than anything ever known among the white race in this country. Villeinage, or serfdom, which had existed in England for centuries, had not altogether disappeared as an actual institution in the reigns of Elizabeth and the first James; and its effects, like those of all slavery, in brutifying and degrading to an animal condition the human being, must at that period have been very apparent among the lowest class of peasantry. It is this class of low serfs and slaves, with their brutal and ungoverned instincts, their sullen and secret discontent, and their dim dreams of bettering themselves by change, which find an ideal portrait in Caliban. The truthful and tender Miranda recoils from him with an instinctive dread of the savage lawlessness that lurks in his nature.

“It is a *villain* (villein)

I do not love to look upon.

*Prospero.*

But as 't is

We cannot miss him ; he *does make our fire,*

*Fetch in our wood and serves in offices*

*That profit us.”*

Act I. Sc. 2.

Caliban is strong in the theory of self-government. He does not see why he has not the right to be “his own king,” and gives no heed to the fact that he has very plainly disclosed by the atrocity he attempted to commit in Prospero’s cell that he by no means understands by self-government the duty of restraining his passions, but only the right to perpetrate any outrage to which he feels disposed. Caliban’s statement of his case, however, when looked at from his point of view (and Caliban, besides his polit-



ical significance, may stand for the savage protesting against the rapacity of civilized man) is not without pertinency; and observable, too, is the democratic instinct with which he seizes upon a physical necessity common alike to high and low — in which respect, therefore, he is on an equality with his master — as an excuse for not performing his work with more diligence.

*"I must eat my dinner.*

*This island's mine by Sycorax, my mother,  
Which thou tak'st from me. . . .*

*I am all the subjects that you have  
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me  
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me  
The rest o' th' island."*

Act I. Sc. 2.

But notwithstanding his rebellious spirit and claim to be freed from all restraint, his nature is one of the most abject servility, and he is ready to become the veriest slave of any worthless demagogue who will administer to his appetites and indulge his passions. Stephano, who makes him drunk, becomes his god. No bitterer satire was ever drawn of the impulses of the ignorant and vicious many than the picture of Caliban, when throwing off the restraints of a wholesome and reasonable authority, — restraints entirely compatible with self-respect, — he becomes the "foot-licker" of the worthless Stephano, and passes exultingly into a state of the most abject and contemptible servitude, the poor beast all the while thinking that he has vastly bettered his condition, and shouting, in his drunken joy, —

"Freedom, hey-day! hey-day, freedom! freedom! hey-day, freedom!"

Stephano's power over Caliban is maintained chiefly by yielding to his wishes and adopting his animosities; and mark the catch that Stephano teaches him, "*Thought is free.*" But free thought is not a safe guide unless accompanied by moral principle. Hence Ariel, playing the tune upon his tabor, leads the low conspirators through

*"Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking gorse and thorns," —*

and at last leaves them dancing up to their chins in a pool of filthy water.

Prospero aims at the reformation of his enemies through persuasion and contrition. He is the philosopher — profoundly versed

in the knowledge of causes — who, by appeals to the reason and imagination, works effects upon the elements of character and not merely upon bodily existence. The only charm he uses is the power of sound, — and *sound*, in Baconian language, is “*a spiritual species*,” — and this brings us to the character of Ariel. As a dramatic personage Ariel is a spirit of the air, affined with the winds and gales, as is manifest in the last scene, where Prospero, promising the king “*auspicious gales*” to bear along his ship, leaves it in charge of Ariel. But, allegorically, Ariel is the air, the vehicle of sound, that is, breath or speech in its highest utterance of eloquence and song, whereby the philosopher and poet work their strongest effects upon the imagination and master the minds of men. He is the ministering spirit that “*cleaves to the thoughts*” of the philosopher and performs all commands “*to the syllable*.” But as speech is but audible thought, and is identified with it, and as the laws of nature, through which the philosopher wields a power over the elements, exist as ideas in the mind, Ariel may be considered the fanciful embodiment of that knowledge of causes, or of what Bacon calls “*forms*,” which is synonymous with power, the power to operate effects. “*Well he conceives*.” He bridges the gap between Nature and Man. A creature of the air, he “*comes with a thought*,” but is confined to no particular element; he is at home in all, —

“*Be’t to fly,*  
To *swim*, to *dive* into the *fire*, to *ride*  
On the *curl’d clouds*.”

In obedience to his master, he can

“*Tread* the ooze  
Of the salt deep,  
And *run* upon the sharp *wind* of the north,  
And do *him business* in the veins o’ th’ earth  
When it is *bak’d* with frost.”

This omniformity is emphasized by Prospero’s commanding him to take the shape of a sea-nymph, which, as there is nothing in the action of the play demanding such a form in particular, and as, moreover, he is under an injunction to remain invisible to all eyes but his master’s, is a requirement intended apparently to show to the spectators Ariel’s “*quality*” or power over forms rather than for any dramatic purpose.

"Go make thyself like a nymph o' th' sea ; *be subject*  
*To no sight but thine and mine ; invisible*  
*To every eye-ball else. Go, take this shape*  
 And hither come in 't."

In the tempest he appears under the form of flame, fire, and sound.

"Jove's *lightnings*, the precursors  
 Of the dreadful *thunder-claps*, more *momentary*  
 And sight-outrunning were not ; the *fire and cracks*  
 Of sulphurous *roaring*, the most mighty Neptune  
 Seem to besiege."

In the masque Ariel presents Ceres, a fact not at all important that the reader should know, but which is mentioned as if to remind him of Ariel's power over form.

It is through Ariel that all Prospero's purposes are effected. An impersonation of science, he is in nature's secrets, can clothe himself with her forms and wield her powers. Over the minds of men he is equally potent ; understanding all the causes and motives which rule their souls and natures ; and combining with this skill the power of sound, he is enabled by melodious strains to excite the fancy to love or by reverberations of thunder to terrify the conscience and madden the memory with remorse.

But Ariel (knowledge), the servant of Prospero, the philosopher, needs discipline. Once this delicate spirit was subjected to Sycorax, the witch and votaress of ignorance and superstition, and upon his refusing to act "her earthy and abhorred commands" was imprisoned "by help of her more potent ministers" in a cloven pine, where

"He did *vent his groans*  
 As fast as *mill wheels strike*,"<sup>1</sup> —

a check upon scientific inquiry that ignorance could not afterwards remove. It was Prospero (the true philosopher) that set free the mind from this state of bondage and subjected it to an enlightened discipline. By its aid, too, philosophy intends to accomplish no less difficult a task than that of placing the true sovereignty of the State upon a basis of intelligence and virtue. And to render Ariel more diligent in effecting this end, Prospero

<sup>1</sup> Will the reader pardon the officiousness that calls attention to the rare beauty and felicity of this simile in a play that inculcates that it is by *industry and labor* alone that the powers of Nature can be subjected to the service of man ?



promises to set him free after it shall be accomplished ; for thought and speech may well be free when under the guidance of moral rectitude, and the State may safely permit the widest latitude of opinion when the government is of that excellence that the ruler is but the outward symbol of justice and mercy. It is worthy of remark, too, that Ariel, though but *air*, is delicately touched with human sympathy, as if to indicate the humanizing influence of letters, often called "the humanities."

This comedy evidently contains many correspondences with Bacon's doctrines of Civil Prudence ; it also has scenes and incidents that seem to put into dramatic action some of his most abstruse yet peculiar and original tenets of Natural Philosophy, and especially of that branch of it which he terms *Operative Philosophy*.

A few short statements of some of his divisions will here be necessary.

He divides Natural Philosophy into *Speculative* or the *Inquisition of Causes*, and *Operative* or the *Production of Effects*.

Of these, the first is exemplified in *Lear*, the second in *Othello* and *The Tempest* ; *Othello* being an example of the effects produced by logic and words, *The Tempest*, of the effects produced by a knowledge and practical application of causes.

Bacon adopts the usual division of causes, into the Efficient and Material, and the Formal and Final ; of which the two former appertain to "Physic" and produce "Mechanics ;" the latter to "Metaphysic" (in Bacon's sense of that term), and produce *Magic*. But "Magic" here does not refer to the Natural Magic "which flutters," as he says, "about so many books embracing credulous and superstitious traditions," but he understands by it "*the science which applies the knowledge of the hidden forms (formal causes) to the production of wonderful operations.*" De Aug. Book III. ch. v.

Of the scholastic term "form" or "formal cause," it may suffice to say that it signifies that which constitutes "the very nature of the thing," or "the law which makes a thing what it is," so that he who knows this law or form of a nature can superinduce that nature on anybody within possible limits.

Natural Philosophy, furthermore, has two branches, one concerning *creatures* and one concerning *natures*.

By *natures* Bacon means *abstract qualities*, and of them makes

two classes, one of which he calls "*appetites and motions*," and by the word "*motion*," it may be observed, Bacon signifies passions, desires, *emotions*. The same peculiar use of the word is met with in the plays, as in *Othello*, "minerals that waken motion," "to cool our raging motions," or in *Cymbeline*, "there is no motion that tends to vice in man," etc. Bacon's language in many passages leads to the inference that he thought all matter endowed with passions and perceptions. By the terms "*appetites and motions*" he refers to those tendencies and inclinations in matter to act according to its attractions and repulsions, its resistance, expansion, contraction, elasticity, and the like.

These "*motions*" of matter he holds as the proper objects of philosophy. In his treatise, "*Thoughts on the Nature of Things*," he has the following : —

"The principles, fountains, causes, and forms of *motions*, that is, the *appetites and passions of every kind of matter*, are the proper objects of philosophy. . . . We should investigate those *appetites and inclinations* of things, by which all that variety of *effects and changes*, which we see in the work of nature and art, is made and brought about. And we should try to enchain nature, like Proteus ; for the right discovery and distinction of the *kinds of motions* are the true bonds of Proteus. For according as *motions*, that is, *incentives and restraints*, can be *spurred on or tied up*, so follows *conversion and transformation* of matter itself." Vol. X. p. 295.

With these appetites and motions in *matter*, which Bacon thus lays down as the proper objects of philosophy, the appetites and motions of *mind* are entirely analogous ; for in *De Augmentis*, Book III. ch. iv., after enumerating the "*motions*" of matter, he adds : "For voluntary motion in animals, the motion that takes place in the action of the senses, *motion of imagination, appetite, and will, motion of the mind, determination, and intellectual faculties*, these I refer to their proper doctrines ;" from which it is manifest that man's passions and appetites belong to the same class with what he calls the "*appetites and motions*" of inanimate matter, and only do not appertain to "*Physic*," because they have their own proper doctrine, that is, the philosophy of Humanity ; and it follows that as they are *spurred on or tied up*, so will ensue *change and conversion* in the natures of men.

This similitude between the desires and passions of animate



and inanimate matter being apparent, the pertinency of the example given in the play of the aim and end of the Baconian philosophy is also obvious. This end was the generation of a new nature on a given nature, which, when carried far enough, would transform one body into another; as by generating or superinducing the density, color, ductility, incorruptibility, and other properties of gold on iron, or other baser metal, it would lead of course to the conversion of the one metal into the other.

In the first aphorism of the second book of the *Novum Organum* are laid down the respective aims of Human Knowledge and Human Power.

"On a given nature to generate and superinduce a new nature or new natures is the work and aim of Human Power. Of a given nature to discover the form . . . is the work and aim of Human Knowledge," that is, "*the scope and end of human power is to give new qualities to bodies*, while the scope and end of human knowledge is *to ascertain the formal cause of all the qualities of which bodies are possessed.*" Preface to Phil. Work, by Ellis, p. 68.

The knowledge of formal causes and consequent power to produce effects are impersonated in Ariel. He is acquainted with the inmost natures of those he works upon, and also with the causes that can "spur on" or "tie<sup>1</sup> up" the *emotions* and *passions* that can produce a change in such natures. He therefore applies to each the influence calculated to effect the end. His command over *forms* is imaged in his omniformity, the poet availing himself of the equivocation between the scholastic and ordinary senses of the word. His ability to influence the minds of men is seen in the frenzy and dismay with which he fills the king and his company by the fearful sights and sounds of the storm. Prospero asks: —

"Who was so firm, so constant that this coil  
Would not infect his reason?  
Ariel. Not a soul  
But felt a fever of the mad, and play'd  
Some tricks of desperation."

He is equally potent over the softer passions, and at the bidding of Prospero, awakens at once a mutual love between Ferdi-

<sup>1</sup> "Untie the spell," says Prospero to Ariel, in reference to Caliban and his companions.



nand and Miranda. It might be supposed that it required no magic, no "hidden form" nor other "metaphysical aid" to produce this result in the case of such a pair of lovers, but the play refers their passion to a preternatural origin, and attributes it to the power of Ariel. Prospero says:—

"At the first sight  
They have chang'd eyes. Delicate Ariel,  
I'll set thee free for this,"—

and so effectually does the spell "spur on" the growth of their reciprocal love, that Prospero deems it prudent to put a check on this swift "business," which he does by binding or "tying up" Ferdinand's spirit as in a dream.

"My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up."

In the case of the change wrought in the nature of Alonzo, the "restraints" upon his bad, and the "incentives" to his good, impulses are placed, "as it were, before our eyes." The influence set in motion is in the nature of that which causes religious conversion; a moral force, which Bacon speaks of as the most powerful of all others to work a change in the characters of men. In his "Discourse touching Helps for the Intellectual Powers," he says: "The will of man is that which admitteth most medicine to cure and alter it. The most sovereign of all is *Religion*, which is able to change and transform it in the deepest and most inward inclinations and motions" (Vol. XIII. p. 300).

The sentiment of religion and of responsibility to Divine Power is excited by appeals to the conscience that arouse a profound sense of guilt and terrify the imagination with the dreadful retribution such guilt is sure to incur at the hands of an offended Deity. These terrors have often been known to convulse the sinner and deprive him temporarily of reason; and even when experienced in a much lighter degree they produce a state of mind which finds no relief from its affliction but in a sincere penitence, and a new growth in the will of a resolve to live a purer life. Entirely analogous with this is the process Ariel employs, although to avoid all irreverence such process is given a classic form. Assuming the portentous shape of a Harpy, he appears to Alonzo and his companions, and denounces their guilt and threatens retribution in tones which sound in their ears like the voice of Nature herself crying out against their sin.

"You are *three men of sin*, whom *Destiny*,  
 (That hath to instrument this lower world  
 And what is in 't) the never-surfeited sea  
 Hath caused to belch up ; You !<sup>1</sup> — and on this island  
 Where man doth not inhabit ; you 'mongst men  
 Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad ;  
 . . . You fools ! I and my fellows  
 Are ministers of Fate . . .

But remember —

For that's my business to you — that you three  
 From Milan did supplant good Prospero ;  
 Expos'd unto the sea, which hath requit it,  
 Him and his innocent child : for which foul deed  
 The Powers, delaying, not forgetting, have  
 Incens'd the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,  
 Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonzo,  
 They have bereft ; and do pronounce by me  
 Lingering perdition — worse than any death  
 Can be at once — shall step by step attend  
 You and your ways ; whose wraths to guard you from, —  
 Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls  
 Upon your heads, — is nothing but heart's sorrow  
 And a clear life ensuing." [He vanishes in thunder.

Notwithstanding the classic spirit<sup>2</sup> of this passage — classic in the introduction of the Harpy, but more especially in making *Destiny* or *Fate* the ruling power of the world — the motives that act upon Alonzo are those terrors of conscience commonly used to produce religious conversion and change of heart. He exclaims : —

" Oh, it is monstrous, monstrous !  
 Methought the billows spoke and told me of it ;  
 The winds did sing it to me ; and the thunder,  
 That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd  
 The name of Prosper : it did bass my trespass.  
 Therefore my son i' th' ooze is bedded ; and  
 I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded  
 And with him there lie mudded."

<sup>1</sup> " You ! " This reading, suggested by a writer in the *Atlantic Monthly*, varies so little from the text of the folio, is so apposite in its meaning, and so consonant with the method of the play, which requires a copious infusion into its diction of small monosyllabic words, standing singly, that it is adopted here without a doubt of its correctness.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Verplanck, whose criticisms are always as sound as they are elegantly expressed, calls attention, in his notes on this play, to the classical tone and spirit of the piece. And his remarks, though justified by the style of the whole play, are particularly so by the speech of Ariel, as the minister and mouthpiece of Fate, denouncing the guilt of Alonzo and the others.

These terrors and the contrition they inspire so work upon Alonzo that a new nature is "superinduced" upon his disposition and a thorough change is wrought in his soul. Even as a base metal is transmuted to a noble one, so is Alonzo transformed from a bad man to a good one, and when restored to his senses, sues for pardon for his wrongs, and hastens to make all the reparation in his power.

There is, however, another particular connected with this change or conversion, which must be noticed, that is, *the latent process*, of which mention is made by Bacon, and described as "the latent process, which in every case of *generation and motion* is carried on from the manifest efficient and the manifest material to the form which is engendered." Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 1.

The *latent process* is that secret, continuous, invisible gradation of movements, which takes place in every change or whenever a body passes from one state to another, as in the familiar instances of water becoming ice or steam; or to use the instances given by Bacon, "when enquiry is made concerning the voluntary motion of animals, from the first impression on the imagination and the continued efforts of the spirit up to the bendings and movements of the limbs, or concerning the motion of the tongue and lips and other instruments, and the changes through which it passes till it comes to the utterance of articulate sounds." Nov. Org. Book II. Aph. 5; also Aph. 1.

In the case of Prospero's "untying the spell" and restoring Alonzo and his companions to their senses, the latent process or change that is then going forward through minute and imperceptible degrees is thus described, the poet using for purpose of illustration some of the grander processes of Nature.

"The charm dissolves apace;  
And as the morning steals upon the night,  
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses  
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle  
Their clearer reason." . . .

"Their understanding  
Begins to swell, and the approaching tide  
Will shortly fill the reasonable shore  
That now lies foul and muddy. Not one of them  
That yet looks on me or would know me."

Alonzo being restored to his senses, Prospero addresses him:—



"Behold, sir King,  
The wronged duke of Milan, Prospero.

*Alonzo.* Whe'r thou beest he or no,  
Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me  
As late I have been, I not know : thy pulse  
Beats, as of flesh and blood : and since I saw thee  
*Th' affliction of my mind amends, with which,  
I fear, a madness held me.* This must crave —  
An if this be at all — a most strange story.  
*Thy dukedom I resign, and do entreat  
Thou pardon me my wrongs."*

It will be observed that the change in Alonzo is not brought about by argument nor by any appeal to the logical faculties, but by inspiring him with a feeling of penitence, "a heart's sorrow," that regenerates his nature, leading him to entreat pardon and make willing atonement for his wrongs.

This conversion of Alonzo may be taken as an ingeniously devised incident, by which the operation of a formal cause "is set, as it were, before our eyes," but, although Bacon was writing the *Novum Organum*, in which this doctrine was first announced, at the very time *The Tempest* was written, he did not give it to the world for at least eight years afterwards.

Having treated of operation by *forms*, Bacon next speaks of "the summary law of nature" or God's creative work in nature.

"But knowledges are as pyramids, whereof history and experience are the basis. And so of Natural Philosophy the basis is Natural History; the stage next the basis is Physic; the stage next the vertical point is Metaphysic. As for the cone and vertical point ('the *work which God worketh* from the beginning to the end,' namely, the *summary law of nature*), it may fairly be doubted whether man's inquiry can attain to it." De Aug. Book III. ch. iv.

But to pass from metaphysic to this summary law of nature is a transition from form and the atom to the creative and spiritual power of God. Of this summary law, though we may not "attain to it," though "God may reserve it within his own curtain," yet, according to Bacon, we may "offer at it" (Bacon's Works, Vol. X. p. 346), and in the play such an attempt is made in the passage in which Prospero comments on the unreality of the masque he had presented, saying that the figures which had been seen were but the *embodiments of his own thoughts*, —

“*Spirits, which by his art*  
He had from *their confines* call'd to *enact*  
His *present fancies*,” —

and adds that human life and the outward world were equally unsubstantial.

“These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were *all spirits*, and  
Are *melted into air, into thin air*,  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall *dissolve*,  
And, like this *insubstantial pageant faded*,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are *such stuff*  
As *dreams are made on*, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.”

But dreams are thoughts to which form is given by the imaging power of the mind, and which pass away as soon as the act of thinking them ceases; so that the passage taken all together seems to lay down the doctrine that the phenomenal world is but the result of the imaging or creative thought of God, and will vanish like a dream as soon as that thought is withdrawn.

All work is for the purpose of producing some effect, and the use of the necessary means is requisite to this end; but this is nothing else than the practical application of the knowledge of causes, so that all work is, in one sense, Operative Philosophy. In Natural Philosophy, only efficient, material, and formal causes are relied upon by Bacon. He rejects final causes as perverting and corrupting inquiry in the *material* world, but in human intercourse admits their validity and use. And inasmuch as the ends which men pursue are the final causes of their actions, and to inquire into their ends (as in *Lear*) is “an inquisition of causes,” so the working on the wills and hearts of men so as to impel them to some particular course of action is a “production of effects.” In the great majority of instances men are worked upon and brought to act either by entreaty or by persuasion, by command, by promises, or threats, that is, by hope of reward or fear of punishment.

Every scene of the play furnishes an instance of work, or Operative Philosophy, whether it appear in so simple a form as that of Caliban or of Ferdinand, carrying logs, or the higher



intellectual occupation of Prospero working out his projects. All art and skill are but the application of the knowledge of causes ; and of the application of an 'efficient' cause a striking example is given in the seamanship of the Boatswain, who, to prevent the wreck of the ship by being driven on a lee-shore, gives the necessary orders, "*Lay her a-hold, a-hold ! set her two courses ; off to sea again ; lay her off !*" and the rest of the scene.

Caliban and Ariel are ruled by promises and threats, rewards and punishments, — all which illustrate the production of effects by *final* causes.

Antonio instigates Sebastian to the murder of the king by distinctly setting before him the advantageous *end*, that is, the sovereignty to be acquired by it, — a strong instance of the effect of a *final* cause ; and if it is not too minute to notice (although the wonderful art of this writer is, perhaps, best seen in his attention to little things) the bottle which Stephano "made of the bark of a tree with his own hands" may be taken as an instance of a *material* cause.

Any tolerably close examination of this piece will prove that it illustrates *Work*, or Operative Philosophy, according to Bacon's notions of the same. And the dramatist, as it was his wont to levy tribute on all the learning and literature of his time, found apparently in Bacon's Two Books of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, many hints and germs which he developed in *The Tempest*. Still this book is insufficient to account for numerous passages and scenes between which and the doctrines of Bacon there exists a striking analogy, but these doctrines must be sought in the *Novum Organum*, which, however, was not published till 1620, or four years after Shakespeare's death. Howbeit, that which in Bacon's works appears as dry statements of abstract propositions is reproduced dramatically in all the complexity and vitality of organic life. The truth put forward in *The Tempest* is evidently that "knowledge is power," and that such knowledge can be gained only by labor and travail. This is the "form" of the play, which is made up of works and travails, while to a "Voyage of *Discovery*" there is a clear allusion in the following lines : —

" O rejoice  
Beyond a common joy, and set it down  
With gold on lasting pillars. In one voyage



Did Claribel *her husband find* at Tunis ;  
 And Ferdinand, her brother, *found a wife*  
 Where *he himself was lost* ; Prospero *his dukedom*  
*In a poor isle, and all of us ourselves*  
*When no man was his own."*

The leading conceptions involved in the plan of a Shakespearian play always give form and color to its diction, its metaphor, and, in fact, to many passages of considerable length. The character and fortunes of Prospero obviously furnish a parallel, and may be taken as an image or type of the Baconian doctrine that the true use of knowledge, which is the fruit of travail, is to restore to man the dominion over nature, which he lost by his fall. Therefore Knowledge, Travail, and Power are (among others) leading conceptions which ramify into subdivisions ; but without attempting an exhaustive analysis, let us consider one or two of them with a view of marking their influence upon the rhetoric of the play.

In the *Novum Organum*, Book II. Aph. 7, Bacon treats of the necessity of obtaining a knowledge of the ultimate particles of bodies, on which their specific properties and virtues depend, and says : " A *separation* and *solution* of bodies must be effected, not by fire indeed but by reasoning and induction." The instrument for this purpose is what metaphysicians call " the divisive and compositive faculty." These processes — analysis and synthesis — belong to the mechanism of the mind ; they are constituent principles of thought, and must needs be common to all men. In all inquiries after knowledge they come into play, although in most cases their action is so rapid that it escapes attention and even consciousness. By these faculties the man of science resolves bodies into their elements, studies their properties, and then recombines them in whole or in part at pleasure. Among a mass of facts, the relation of the parts to the whole is traced, and their connection and sequence established. Hence ensue order, arrangement, progress, according to principle. These are qualities in which, as we have seen, Prospero excels.

The most familiar instance, however, of the action of " the divisive and compositive faculty " is in the use of speech. Every man who speaks a sentence, or who listens to one, brings into play this faculty. A thought exists entire in the mind of the speaker, who, to convey it to another mind, resolves it into its



On the other hand, with *composition* (synthesis) are affined in meaning words of *union*, as *meet, join, knit, knot, gather, collect, approach*, etc.

In the following phrase appear both separation and composition: —

“Is she the goddess that hath severed us,  
And brought us thus together?”

It may be noted also that the action of the piece, taken in its largest view, is an exemplification of analysis and synthesis. The characters are dispersed in distinct groups over the island, and after they have been severally put to the test they are again reunited in one company at the end.

By “separation and solution” bodies are resolved into their first *elements*. This reduction of a thing to its minutest parts is found in such lines as these: —

“I’ll shew thee *every fertile inch* of the island.”

“He’ll be hang’d yet  
Though *every drop of water* swear against it.”

“A *space* whose *every cubit*  
Seems to cry out, ‘How shall that Claribel  
*Measure us back to Naples?*’”

In the next there is a subdivision of a genus into its species: —

“Where, but even now, with *strange* and *several* noises  
Of *roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling* chains,  
And *more diversity* of sounds, all horrible,  
We were awak’d.”

An element being the smallest indivisible part of a thing, it at once suggests *minuteness, singleness, and individuality*. These notions are infused into the style with incomparable skill, first, by the use of words signifying *minuteness* and *singleness*, as *minute, fine, least, little, delicate, single, trifle*, etc., and then by the introduction of diminutives, as *cockerel, chick, ladykin*, or of words denoting the smallest part of a thing, as a *hair, a drop, a dowe, a syllable, a morsel, an eye* (i. e. a tinge) of green, and also the repeated use of *one, once, alone*; but particularly by introducing a multitude of phrases of two words, or three at most, besides a large number of *single insulated words*, many of them monosyllables, with which last the play is plentifully sprinkled.

The notion of individuality or *oneness* is strikingly expressed in the following lines: —



“Now I'll believe  
That there are *unicorns* ; that in Arabia  
There's *one tree*, the *phœnix' throne*, *one phœnix*  
At this hour reigning there.”

The constant recurrence, under various forms, of the notions of *singleness* and *minuteness* adds greatly to the effect of the play, the philosophy of which teaches the value of the minutest moments and the potency of the smallest things corresponding in this with the Baconian doctrine that all true knowledge is attained by the study of particulars, and all operation is employed upon individuals.

The scene, too, is on an *island*, and that a *solitude*, and the time of the action is fixed at a brief stated period, and we find many expressions denoting instants of time or appointed periods, as “in a *twink*, at *once*, *to-night*, *once a month*, *once a day*, *supper-time*, *midnight*, *noon-tide*, *the sixth hour*,” etc. The place of the action, too, is sometimes brought down emphatically to a fixed spot, as “here on this grass-plot, in this very place.”

Opposed to *singleness* are the notions of *plurality* and *company*, as in *score*, *twain*, *couple*, etc., or in phrases combining the two notions, as “the king and all his company,” “your Highness and your train,” “Caliban and his companions,” “I and my fellows,” and others.

The elements, popularly, are *earth*, *air*, *fire*, *water*. But as the *Tempest* represents man under his physical conditions and mainly diligent to guard against the skyey influences, there are found in the vocabulary *snow*, *rain*, *cloud*, *light*, *flame*, *storm*, *sea*, *sky*, *winds*, *waves*, *sun*, *moon*, *thunder*, *lightning*, and similar references to the elemental world; also many terms indicating the action and influence of the elements, as *burn*, *freeze*, *wet*, *blow*, and so on, and others referring to man's physical wants and necessities, as *sleeping*, *waking*, *eating*, *drinking*, *weariness*, *pain*, *ache*, *disease*, *suffering*, *drowning*, *death*, etc.

The mouth is the organ of speech, and as such is the instrument of the intellect. But it is also the organ through which men administer to their animal wants and appetites, the undue indulgence of which debases the mind and emphatically attests the absence of discipline. The importance of its uses is suggested in the opening scene where death by drowning is, by metonymy, spoken of as *coldness of mouth*. “What! must our mouths be

cold?" says the sailor in view of the immediate wreck of the ship. By it, too, utterance is given to those inarticulate sounds, which express bodily pleasure, pain, and other states of feeling. Not only, therefore, is the mouth itself, with its adjuncts, teeth, tongue, throat, cheeks, lungs, etc., many times made mention of, but its offices, as the organ of *sound* (and sound implies the *ear* and *hearing*), in speaking, singing, laughing, sighing, howling, roaring, shrieking, etc., as well as its more animal functions of eating, drinking, biting, swallowing, gaping, mowing, hissing, licking, etc., are constantly introduced both in a literal and metaphorical sense. Hence, too, the mention made of the meals of the day. One of Prospero's magic shows is a banquet devoured by a Harpy. Stephano and his companions very amply exemplify the animal uses of the mouth.

The hero of this comedy is Man doomed to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; the heir of want and suffering, the slave of the elements, yet with possibilities of being king over them by knowledge. In such a world the highest virtue is prudence, and the aim of life utility and material comfort. Prudence regulates human life according to the laws and economy of the world. It is the practical application of knowledge to the production of effects, thereby converting knowledge into power; whence it is obvious that the numerous words in the vocabulary expressive of *authority* or of the domestic or political relations are directly connected with this central thought of the play.

Prudence, moreover, is observant of the order of time, which corresponds with the order of nature and the progress of events and is inseparably connected with the notion of *advancement*.

*Advantage* is a synonym of *opportunity*, and is allied, also, with terms signifying *utility*, *use*, *increase*. Among others is found *utensil*, a word dropped by Prospero and picked up by Caliban, who "gets it off" when taking a prospective glance at Prospero's possible going to housekeeping!

"He has brave *utensils* (for so he calls them)

Which, when he has a house, he'll deck withal."

*Advancement* runs through the piece; it is involved fundamentally with the notions of *travail*, *discovery*, *proficiency* in knowledge. "I must needs hold," says Bacon, "that the *art of discovery may advance as discoveries advance*" (Nov. Org. Book I. Aph. 130). It is seen in the steady advance, step by



step, of Prospero's plans to regain his power; also in the continuous purposes of the two sets of conspirators; and the whole movement of the piece — and each of the plays has a special movement in accordance with its leading conception — is that of a regular orderly progress. Of course, it appears in metaphor and diction. Of *latent process*, or advancement through minute degrees, the following are instances: —

“ But *one fiend at a time*  
I'll fight *their legions o'er*.  
*Seb.* I'll be *thy second*.”

“ *Single* I'll resolve you  
(Which to you shall seem probable) of *every*  
*These happen'd accidents*.”

“ *All the infections* that the sun *sucks up*  
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall and make him  
By *inch-meal* a *disease*.”

This dominant notion of *Advancement* through the fit and prudent use of time — the result of the highest wisdom — is æsthetically balanced and strengthened by contrast with many passages framed on the opposite notion of *preposterousness* (or the placing that first which should be last) which, in a passage already quoted, Bacon declares to be one of the greatest and commonest violations of Civil Prudence. This appears under the analogous forms of inversion, reaction, reverse movement, contrariety of effect or reciprocal action, and enters into the thought and shapes the structure of many passages and even controls the collocation of words. A score of examples might be quoted, but the following will suffice to make clear the poet's method.

“ But this is trifling;  
And all the more it *seeks to hide itself*  
The *bigger bulk it shews*.”

“ There they hoist us  
*To cry to the sea that roar'd to us, to sigh*  
*To the winds, that sighing back again*  
*Did us but loving wrong*.”

“ *My trust*  
Like a *good parent*, did beget of him  
A *falsehood*, in its contrary as great  
As *my trust was*.”

“ O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound  
And crown *what I profess with kind event*



If I speak true : if hollowly, *invert*  
*What best is boded me to mischief."*

"And ye that on the sands with printless feet  
 Do chase the ebbing *Neptune* and do fly him  
 When he comes back."

"Like one  
 Who, having unto truth, by telling of it  
 Made such a sinner of his memory  
 To credit his own lie."

"If you but knew how you the purpose cherish  
 Whiles thus you mock it ! how in stripping it  
 You more invest it !"

"My prime request  
 Which I do last pronounce."

The idea of the play that man by Travail and Discovery may recover his dominion over nature, as typified by Prospero regaining his dukedom by Art, has an accessory in Bacon's doctrine that all new discoveries are *new creations* ; and if the play is a philosophical allegory, representing views similar to those of Bacon, there should be found in its diction and dialogue some proof that a conception so important had a place in the plan of the writer, for so uniform is the method of this writer that all the conceptions into which the main idea of a work can be analyzed are sure to appear in some form in its diction and composition. All *work, making, and production* are *creation* ; these notions are found everywhere in the play, but *creation* in its primitive sense is a *begetting* or *bringing forth*. The Latin *creo, -are, is, 1. To bring forth, to produce, to make, to beget ; part. creatus, sprung from, born of, an offspring, a son. 2. To produce, prepare, cause, occasion. And. Latin Dict. in v.*

Phrases containing this particular signification of *bringing forth, etc.*, are quite numerous. It may be remarked that *Generation* and *to generate* are terms habitually used by Bacon to denote the production of effects. And in his famous first Aphorism of Book II. of the *Novum Organum* he defines the aim of Human Power, as we have seen, in these words : "On a given body to *generate* and superinduce a new nature or new natures is the work and aim of Human Power ;" and in this way he sought to new-create, change, and transform bodies. And in the play the same doctrine appears in this passage :—

“Thy false uncle

Being once perfected how to grant suits,  
How to deny them, who t’ advance, and who  
To trash for over-topping, *new created*  
*The creatures that were mine, I say, or chang’d ’em,*  
Or else *new-form’d ’em.*”

This instance is directly in point with regard to the *changes* to be effected in bodies by the generation of new natures on theirs.

In the following citations is found the radical thought of *creation*: —

“Then was this island  
(Save for the son *she did litter here,*  
*A freckled whelp, hag-born*) not honour’d with  
A human shape.”

“Thou poisonous slave, *got by the devil himself*  
Upon *thy wicked dam,* come forth.”

“I had peopled else  
*This isle with Calibans.*”

“All things in common nature *should produce*  
Without sweat or endeavour. . . .  
Nature *should bring forth*  
Of *its own kind,* all foison, all abundance.”

“The setting of thine eye and cheek proclaim  
A matter from thee, and a *birth indeed*  
Which *throes thee much to yield.*”

Other quotations could be made which, like the foregoing, would prove that *creation* is a radical notion in the idea or theory of the play; but this theory of new discoveries being creations, which Bacon founded on a passage of Lucretius, appeared first in the *Novum Organum*; yet it is evident that this view of man’s fortunes and destiny, which are so peculiarly in accord with Bacon’s love of knowledge and intense desire to benefit the human race, was entirely familiar to the writer of *The Tempest*; in fact, has a superb illustration in the beneficent power of Prospero.

Who is the true king? is the question that is asked and answered by this comedy. Alonzo, Antonio, and Sebastian are political shams. Alonzo has no kingly qualities. He sinks beneath the loss of his son, and refuses to entertain even a reasonable hope of his safety.

With Antonio and Sebastian power is not faculty, but mere brute force. They seek no supremacy by inward qualification, but hold that fraud and violence are the best agents of advancement, and "obedient steel, three inches of it," the true instrument to attain sovereignty.

One moral taught by *The Tempest* is that work and industry are honorable, and that no excellence nor success can be had without them. And it is this truth that gives point and significance to the humorous reverse of it, which Gonzalo sketches in his model commonwealth.

Notwithstanding the deeper esoteric meanings which lie under the letter of the play, its romantic wildness is in all things preserved. We are not allowed for a moment to forget that we are stranded upon a desert island far away in unknown seas, where everything is wonderful and strange; where sweet sounds float in the air, and fairies dance upon the sands, and echoing in their songs the crowing cock and the watch-dog's bark, impress us with a deeper sense of the wildness of the spot, by suggesting amid its solitude, such familiar images of rural homes and neighborhoods.

Malone wrote an argument to prove that *The Tempest* was suggested to Shakespeare by the storm that wrecked the fleet of Sir George Somers off the Bermudas in 1609, of which an account was written by one Silvester Jourdain and published in 1610; and that from this storm the play takes the title of *The Tempest*. It is evident that the writer of the play was acquainted with this account, and also with Eden's "History of Travail," and other books of American discovery. But the storm scene in the comedy is quite short, and is hardly more than an induction to the piece. It is not sufficient in itself to give title to the play as *The Tempest*, whereas the title should refer to the whole action of the piece. We must, therefore, look further. The word *Tempest* is the Latin *tempestas*, with the termination dropped. The significations of *tempestas* are thus given:—

*Tempestas*. — I. A limited time or period, a portion, point, or space in time, a time, season, period.

II. Time, with respect to physical qualities, *weather*.

A. Literally, of good as well as of bad weather.

2. Of bad, especially of stormy weather; *a storm, a tempest*.

B. Tropically, *calamity, misfortune*. And. Lat. Dict. in v.



The Latin *tempestivus*, a word from the same root, gave the old English word (now obsolete) *tempestive* or *seasonable*.

Now, when we remember that the action of this play is by its own stated conditions to terminate within a *certain limited period of time*; that the organic idea takes the form of the observance of opportunity or the *wise use* or *fitness of time*; that the subject of the play has reference to the *storms* and *calamities* of life as well as to man's relations to the elemental world generally; and above all when we think of the fondness of this writer for subtle and hidden meanings, and for accumulating thought upon one word, it is manifest that in entitling his comedy *The Tempest*, he had in view—at least in his own mind—the primary and classical signification of the word. And for the reason that a *Tempest* is a limited period of time, and not from regard to any critical canon, is the unity of time in this piece strictly preserved. Surprise has frequently been expressed that at the maturity of his life, and in fact at the close of his labors as a dramatist, two plays should have been written by the same man so unlike as *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, the one violating in the most extravagant manner the unities of time and place, the other preserving them in all respects; but this extreme diversity is the necessary consequence of the fidelity with which the great Master adheres to his wonderful Method.

708

705









Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: Feb. 2009

## Preservation Technologies

A WORLD LEADER IN COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 157 090 0